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ON THE COVER

A highly decorated brass octant, French, c. 1786, with magnetic compass incorporated into the frame. Swags, flags, dolphin, and cannon are engraved on the limbs; "DEDIÉ A SA MAJESTÉ LOUIS XVI / FAIT PAR MAGNIÉ A DUNKURQUE" (Dedicated to his Majesty Louis XVI made by Magnie at Dunkirk) engraved on the frame. Peabody Essex Museum Collection.

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Editor's Note

Controversy continues to surround the Great Lakes bulk carrier *Edmund Fitzgerald* which sank in the gales of November, 1975, as Gordon Lightfoot's popular song continues to remind us. Last year, a team of divers explored the remains of the *Fitzgerald* on the bottom of Lake Superior. The purpose was to visually record and map the site. The result was not what officials in the United States or Canada expected. The team filmed the wreck site, which covers a considerable area since the 729-foot vessel broke into two pieces. The divers worked from a submersible because, at five hundred feet, the wreck is well below the limits of free diving. All was well until the film crew came across the remains of a victim of the tragic sinking. Not one of the crew survived the sinking and no bodies were found; Lake Superior lived up to its reputation for never giving up its dead.

The trouble began when the divers/filmmakers made the film available to commercial television. Family members and friends of those who perished on the *Fitzgerald* were confronted with the identification of the deceased, possible coroner's inquiries, and suggestions that all human remains be recovered. The families immediately came forward to object, preferring that the *Fitzgerald* be treated as an underwater sanctuary for the deceased sailors. The Oglebay Norton Company headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, which operated the *Fitzgerald* through its Columbia Steamship Division, was contacted by surviving family members who pleaded that the remains of loved ones be left in their resting places in Lake Superior, the greatest of the inland seas. The issue is an international one, since the ship lies in Canadian waters.

Those obsessed with the wreck of the *Fitzgerald* are generally driven by the potential profits from the sale of film and photographs, speaker's honoraria or other financial benefits. The research objectives found in proposals to permit agencies to explore shipwreck sites are often shallow. They seldom obtain the endorsement of professional underwater archaeologists or historians. Although the ship is of little historical value, and plans and

documentation exist for the vessel and others of its type, it is the circumstances of the sinking which continue to generate interest — as with the *Titanic*. There are plans for a Canadian Navy sponsored dive in a submersible this summer.

The significance of this subject to those in the maritime field is the sensitivity and common sense which much be applied to working with submerged cultural resources. The United States Navy, through the Naval Historical Center, addresses the problem with an awareness which should be complimented by the civilian sector of society. The difference, of course, is that the United States government does not, save by special act, relinquish ownership of its vessels, even after they sink in foreign waters. An example is the Confederate commercial raider CSS *Alabama*, recently discovered off Cherbourg, France. The U.S. navy retains ownership of the vessel and its contents, while research and excavation efforts are led by the French. Also, an arrangement was worked out with the Canadian government for the War of 1812 ships *Hamilton* and *Scourge* found three hundred feet below the surface of Lake Ontario. In this case, ownership was ceded to the Canadian government, which agreed to provide appropriate recognition and internment of human remains found at the site.

Students of maritime history and nautical archaeology are frequently brought into contact with the law. Aside from the recent work of scholars such as Donald Petrie, Carl Swanson, Faye Kert, Gaddis Smith, Frederick Leiner, and a few others, maritime law and the use by historians of legal records lies outside the training and experience of most of those working in this field. There are sufficient reasons, both past and present, which make legal history an attractive and rewarding field of study. Clearly, a knowledge of the law as applied on the seas and waterways, or below them, is of value to those working in the maritime field.

Timothy J. Runyan
Greenville, North Carolina



The Jeffersonian Gunboats in Service, 1804-1825

SPENCER TUCKER

On 6 July 1804, Secretary of the Navy Robert Smith ordered gunboat Number 1 to cruise between Charleston and Savannah to apprehend pirates, enforce revenue laws, and protect American and neutral vessels within United States territorial jurisdiction.¹ In early September 1804, No. 1 created considerable grist for critics of President Thomas Jefferson's new gunboat program when a hurricane drove her from her moorings, and landed her high and dry in a corn field on White Marsh Island, Georgia. The *Connecticut Courant* had this to say: "Let her rest there, and she will grow into a ship of the line by the time we go to war with Spain. Should this new experiment in agriculture succeed, we may expect to see the rice-swamps of Carolina and the tobacco fields of Virginia turned by our philosophical Government into dry docks and gun-boat gardens." At a banquet in Boston, one of the toasts was: "Gun-boat Number One; if our gun-boats are of no use upon the water, may they at least be the best upon earth." Despite this, No. 1 was soon refloated and back in service. But Jefferson's decision to build inexpensive small gunboats rather than ships-of-the-line continued to be ridiculed.

The first test for the gunboats came during the Barbary Wars when, despite Commodore Edward Preble's observation that gunboats could not safely sail the Atlantic,² Smith ordered nine of the ten available (No. 1 was incapable of ocean service) to sail to the Mediterranean. They set sail in May 1805.³

The gunboats were heavily loaded during their Atlantic passage, and the crossing caused anxiety for officers and seamen alike. Lieutenant James Lawrence, commanding No. 6, said that he had not the slightest idea of arriving in the Mediterranean,

"or indeed, anywhere else."⁴ All save No. 7, which was lost at sea, made the crossing. Commodore John Rodgers reported their arrival by noting, "The singular phenomenon of such boats crossing the Atlantic, will greatly astonish all Europe."⁵ It probably astonished some in their crews as well.

There were several incidents involving the gunboats and warships of other powers. The most celebrated of these took place on 12 June when No. 6 (Lieutenant Lawrence), which still had her guns stowed below, was brought to off Cádiz by vessels of the British blockading squadron. Three crewmen claimed their protection as British subjects and, despite protests from Lawrence, the British insisted on their right to keep them.⁶ The incident, while soon forgotten (except perhaps by Lawrence), may also have reinforced the British belief that Americans could be treated in cavalier fashion, as occurred in the 1807 *Chesapeake-Leopard* affair.

None of the eight gunboats sent to the Mediterranean saw combat there. All returned to the United States in the summer of 1806.⁷

These gunboats and others soon found useful employ along the northeast and southeast Atlantic coasts, and especially on the Gulf of Mexico coast at New Orleans, where a naval base was established in 1806 for a squadron of western-built gunboats. This was part of an effort to end the activities of freebooters attacking American export trade in the guise of Spanish, French, and British privateers. New Orleans was one of the few places where a gunboat flotilla made sense, and in September 1805, Secretary Smith recommended all available gunboats be sent there.⁸ Smith did order



American gunboats capture French privateers on the Mississippi River in 1808. The artist is Captain William Bainbridge Hoff. Photo courtesy of the Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC.

several gunboats to New Orleans during the Burr conspiracy, which, however, collapsed before they could take part.⁹ The gunboats were also mobilized after the June 1807 *Chesapeake-Leopard* affair.

The first big test for the gunboats came with the Embargo Act, proclaimed by Jefferson in December 1807.¹⁰ For the next two years, until the embargo was repealed, gunboats bore the brunt of its enforcement. The busiest stations were those where smuggling was concentrated, on the periphery of U.S. territory: at Passamaquoddy, Maine; St. Marys, Georgia; and New Orleans.

While Captain John Rodgers reported few violations by sea from Newport as far south as the Delaware Bay (much of the illegal cargo there simply moved by land into Canada), other commanders gave a different picture. Captain John Shaw at Norfolk noted that the smugglers were “some of our quickest and best sailors — and would at all times, run a Gun Boat, out of a sight in a few hours.”¹¹ Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin echoed this sentiment when he noted that gunboats “are better calculated as a stationary force, and for the purpose of stopping vessels in

certain places, than of pursuing vessels.”¹²

The gunboats probably had an impossible task. Even if all had been mobilized, they would not have been able to police the entire U.S. coastline, and there were too many fast coastal vessels capable of sailing to the West Indies to keep under surveillance.

In March 1809, trade was reopened with all nations except France and Britain. Soon afterward, plans were shelved to increase the New Orleans flotilla to fifty gunboats, and all gunboats save those at New Orleans were ordered into ordinary.¹³

The New Orleans gunboats were actively involved in President James Madison’s efforts to wrest West Florida from Spain. Taking advantage of a West Florida insurrection, in October 1810 Madison asserted U.S. control of territory to the Perdido River, although American troops actually occupied land only to the Pearl River. Madison justified this on the tenuous grounds that this was part of the Louisiana Purchase. On 10 December, Captain John Shaw’s five New Orleans gunboats covered a landing by troops above Baton Rouge and then dropped down the Mississippi and an-

chored, while Governor William Claiborne, at the head of troops and “volunteer horse” ended the short-lived Floridian republic. Although further U.S. annexations in West Florida did not take place until the War of 1812, gunboats at New Orleans were kept busy contending with numerous privateers, a number of which were captured.¹⁴

New Orleans gunboats also enforced passage from New Orleans to Fort Stoddert past Spanish-held Fort Mobile. When, in early June 1811, Spanish authorities turned back a schooner laden with military stores for Stoddert, Shaw ordered Lieutenant Joseph Bainbridge to Mobile with the brig *Viper* and twelve gunboats. They reached Mobile Bay on 2 July. When the Spanish refused passage, Bainbridge deployed his gunboats and the Spanish backed down. To ensure continued compliance, Shaw assigned three gunboats permanently to Mobile.¹⁵

There were other engagements between New Orleans gunboats and privateers and freebooters off the coast, and the gunboats took five privateers in August and September 1811.¹⁶ More often, however, the privateers got away. Shaw lamented: “The larger number of our Gun Vessels, are well known to be dull Sailors; and have to act against vessels built particularly for fast Sailing.”¹⁷ Shaw’s call that fast cruising vessels be sent to the New Orleans station went unanswered.

Another role for gunboats in this period was to suppress the slave trade. Although prohibited by Congress after 1 January 1808, trade in slaves continued along the Gulf and South Atlantic coasts. At the end of 1810, Secretary of the Navy Paul Hamilton ordered remaining Charleston gunboats into service “to restrain this disgraceful traffic.”¹⁸

Only a few months before the start of the War of 1812, gunboats at St. Marys were involved in an attempted land grab in East Florida, where President Madison hoped to duplicate his coup in West Florida. In January 1811, he authorized former Georgia governor General George Mathews to secure “the surrender in an amicable manner” of “the remaining portion or portions” of both West and East Florida. Mathews organized a “patriot” force in East Florida with his immediate objective the smuggler’s stronghold of Fernandina on Amelia Island.¹⁹ Two hundred armed “patriots” set up

camp opposite St. Marys inside East Florida, and Mathews asked the navy for assistance. Captain Hugh Campbell complied by ordering five gunboats to convoy boats carrying insurgents to Amelia Island, but the Spanish commander at Fernandina, Don Lopez, refused to surrender.

On the morning of 18 May, the gunboats anchored opposite the fort and prepared for action. Lopez demanded to know if the U.S. government had ordered them there and whether they would operate on the insurgent side. As Campbell later noted, “To Have acknowledged the first would have implicated the Government.” He fudged by telling Lopez that the naval force near Amelia was “not intended to act in the name of the United States, but to aid in support of a large proportion of your countrymen in arms, who have thought proper to declare themselves independent. . . .” With Campbell implying that he was prepared to assist the insurgents, on 18 May Lopez surrendered Amelia Island. Regular U.S. Army troops, who crossed into Spanish territory “to protect” the insurgents from Spanish troops, ultimately held most territory between St. Marys and St. Augustine. With relations with Britain deteriorating, however, the Madison administration ultimately disavowed the whole enterprise. Captured Spanish territory was returned and gunboats in Spanish waters were withdrawn (the Americans finally relinquished Fernandina on 16 May 1813). The annexation of East Florida, however, remained a goal of the Madison administration and Southern War Hawks.²⁰

The gunboats, which had a mixed peacetime record, received their sternest test in the War of 1812. Most U.S. naval efforts during the war were directed to coastal defense and to the Great Lakes.²¹ The coastal defense mission fell to gunboats supplemented by other craft. These flotillas did discourage the British from bringing big ships into some harbors, such as New York, and their presence certainly discouraged enemy boat attacks, but the Royal Navy was still able to enter most coastal areas at will, especially Chesapeake Bay.

Immediately on learning of the official declaration of war, Georgia Governor David Mitchell and Captain Campbell decided to seize all British

vessels in Amelia Island waters and in that part of East Florida under American control. Among the vessels taken were two ships and two brigs, one of eight guns. All, save one, which was empty, were laden with timber and plank for British ports. Campbell worried about the legality of this action, but he had no doubt about the importance of gunboats on the St. John's River, believing that they had:

*not only kept that part of the Country from being plundered by marauders from St. Augustine, but rendered secure the Situation of our Troops before that place, where without the Gun Boats, a Spanish force would have probably been sent to Cut off all Communication with the north side of the St. John's, which I am of opinion will be attempted by the British should they make Common Cause with the Spaniards in East Florida.*²²

The Jeffersonian gunboats did not play any significant role early in the war. Hamilton's successor as secretary of the navy, William Jones, did not have a high opinion of them. He wrote to his brother: "They are sluggish in their movements & are not calculated either to pursue or retreat with celerity. Their best use is at anchor, in a favorable situation, commanding the channel in the direction of the approach of the enemy."²³

In late February 1813, Jones ordered gunboats in commission reduced to six at St. Marys, fifteen at New York, five at Philadelphia to defend the Delaware River, and fourteen to defend the Chesapeake. He allowed New Orleans ten gunboats. Jones refused to allow gunboats to be repaired. Indeed, on 3 March 1813, Congress authorized the president to sell or dispose of gunboats "as may have become unfit for service, or as in his judgment may no longer be necessary to be retained by the government."²⁴ Even with the reduced number of gunboats in service, Jones found it hard to ship crews for them and tried offsetting this by bounties.²⁵

Gunboats were little used in the northeast Atlantic theater, save for convoy duties and scattered engagements. Defense of the Chesapeake and

Delaware bays, however, made the Mid-Atlantic an active theater for gunboat operations, as was the case with the South Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. Captain Alexander Murray, commanding the Delaware flotilla, strongly defended gunboats, which he called "the most suitable Vessels for this Bay, & sail nearly as fast as any of the flotilla." He also thought them the most comfortable in bad weather.²⁶

As the war progressed, flotillas incorporated growing numbers of barges as well as floating batteries, fireships, and other small craft. Flotillas were established at Portsmouth, Boston, Newport, New London, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Norfolk, Wilmington, Charleston, St. Marys, and New Orleans. The New York flotilla had fifty-three gunboats, twice as many as any other station during the war. Undoubtedly, the South Atlantic coast and New Orleans would have profited if some of them had been located there instead.²⁷

During the war, some gunboats were modified into purely defensive craft, especially in the South Atlantic theater. At Charleston, Captain John Dent turned No. 9 into a block ship armed with four long 32s and four 9-pounders to command a channel in Charleston Roads. He also modified No. 166 (renamed the *Alligator*) the same way, arming her with eight 12-pounder carronades and two long 6s; and he converted No. 10 into a floating battery of four long 9-pounders and two 18-pounder carronades to defend Georgetown.²⁸

While the gunboats were not usually employed as intended, they did provide valuable service during the war in a variety of ways. They transported men, ordnance, and supplies; they protected against enemy small craft and boats, and they served as hospital vessels, lighters, pilot vessels, places of confinement, store ships, and even floating magazines. They also towed larger vessels. The Chesapeake and Delaware Bay flotillas did somewhat restrict movements of British foraging parties, and they provided intelligence on enemy fleet dispositions. While they had little effect on British naval movements, the gunboats

also provided a morale boost to coastal inhabitants. The gunboats' most important role, however, was in the convoying of coastal vessels, particularly in the South Atlantic theater of operations.²⁹

The U.S. Navy's most important work during the war was securing control of lakes Erie and Champlain. Only three vessels of the gunboat program were on interior lakes during the war: the *Oneida* on Lake Ontario and Nos. 169 and 170 on Lake Champlain. As far as is known, the latter two gunboats had little impact.³⁰

Throughout the war, there were scattered engagements involving the gunboats. Examples are No. 88's capture of the *Chebacque* (1), tender to the British frigate *Tenedos*, and the recapture from the British by the New York flotilla of a schooner from New Orleans with a cargo of cotton and lead. Also, in May 1814, eleven New York gunboats prevented the British from taking the *Regent*, a brig from France with "a very valuable cargo."³¹

One of the largest gunboat captures was a British privateer, the schooner *Fortune of War*, taken by Nos. 160 and 151 off Sapelo Bar. Out of Bermuda, she had a crew of thirty-five, and mounted two 6-pounders. She surrendered after two shots from No. 160 and one man killed.³²

During the war, the British captured a number of gunboats, usually by means of numerous small boats. One unsuccessful attempt took place on 29 January 1814. Schooner *Alligator* (ex-No. 166) was bound for Charleston when she ran into an enemy squadron of three vessels including a frigate, which promptly gave chase. Fearful of being cut off from Charleston, Sailing Master James Bassett took No. 166 about two miles into the Stono River, anchored, and prepared for action. That night, under a bright moon, the British sent six boats, under muffled oars, against the schooner. During a thirty-minute engagement, the *Alligator's* pilot was mortally wounded and the vessel ran aground. The Americans disabled the two largest British barges and the remainder left. The sloop's rigging and sails were "cut to pieces," and she took shots in her hull; the Americans also had two men killed and two others wounded.³³

Occasionally, the gunboats helped turn back an enemy attack. In January 1813 fourteen Norfolk gunboats, their crews augmented by men from the U.S. frigate *Constellation*, helped prevent attacks against the frigate by a large number of British boats carrying up to 2,000 men. The same gunboats, however, were unable to prevent a British landing that led to the capture of Hampton.³⁴

Certainly, the gunboats were all but worthless in offensive operations against larger vessels. On 19 June 1813, the Americans discovered a British frigate, the *Junon* (38), becalmed some three miles from two other frigates in the upper part of Hampton Roads, and flotilla commander Captain Joseph Tarbell decided to attempt a night attack.

Adverse winds and squalls delayed the attack until early on the morning of the twentieth, when the gunboats anchored in a crescent formation three-quarters of a mile from the *Junon* and opened fire. The ensuing action lasted three-quarters of an hour but the frigate sustained little damage. A breeze enabled the other frigates to get underway and come to the *Junon's* assistance, forcing the gunboats to retire. The Americans falsely believed they had inflicted "considerable damage" on the *Junon*.³⁵

James Fenimore Cooper contended that the attack on the *Junon* had unfortunate results:³⁶

It served to convince most of the sea-officers engaged on board the gun-boats . . . of the bad qualities of that description of vessel, they having been very generally found wanting in a sufficient degree of steadiness to render their fire certain, even in smooth water. The recoils of the guns caused them to roll to a degree that rendered the aim uncertain, and it has been seen that they could only be kept in the proper positions by the aid of sweeps.

Shortly after her brush with gunboats in Hampton Roads, the *Junon* sailed into Delaware Bay in company with a brig sloop, the *Martin* (18). On 29 July, a division of the Delaware flotilla commanded by Lieutenant Samuel Angus discovered the *Martin* grounded on Crow's Shoal. Angus ordered an attack and positioned his eight gunboats

and two other vessels within three-quarters of a mile of the *Martin* and anchored. The situation seemed favorable for the attackers, especially as the *Junon* was a mile and a half away and unable to close because of shallow water. Once again the engagement — this time lasting nearly three hours — was inconclusive. Most British shot went high, but the British manned boats and took No. 121 (Sailing Master William Sheed) by storm when a strong tide swept her beyond supporting range. No. 121 had fired three rounds of grape from her 32-pounder against her attackers when the carriage gave way. Although left only with small arms, the Americans put up a “gallant resistance” under musket and carronade fire; but, with seven of his men wounded, Sheed surrendered. British losses were seven killed and twelve wounded.³⁷

The Jeffersonian gunboats played virtually no role in the Battles of the Barges, or St. Leonard’s Creek, during the British drive on Washington in June 1814. Only three gunboats, Nos. 137 and 138 and block sloop *Scorpion* (ex- No. 59), were in Joshua Barney’s Chesapeake flotilla, and these had no combat role. No. 137 served as a storeship, with her main gun removed. On 26 June, the two gunboats were abandoned and scuttled in a creek to prevent their capture.³⁸

The most important role played by the gunboats was in convoying coastal traffic. Captain Isaac Hull at Portsmouth may have been the first to use gunboats for this purpose when, on 18 August 1813, he sent two gunboats to convoy twelve merchantmen around Cape Ann.³⁹ In late May 1814, thirteen New York gunboats under Captain Jacob Lewis escorted forty eastward-bound coasting vessels to New London, where they encountered three enemy blockaders, one a large razee. Another inconclusive three-hour engagement followed, but the entire convoy did pass safely into port.⁴⁰

On the South Atlantic seaboard, there were no large U.S. warships, few gunboats, and a long coastline to protect. As Captain Campbell put it, “This is the most convenient part of the world for illicit trade that I have ever seen.”⁴¹

The Outer Banks of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia enclose an inland sea of

sounds. Small craft used this interior waterway to avoid both the dangers of the sea and seagoing warships. British captains were not familiar with the shoals and passageways and were reluctant to take their vessels across the bars. They did discover, however, that they could move parallel to American vessels inland and then send shallow draft boats from their ships to intercept them before the slow-moving gunboats could come up.⁴²

On 12 December 1813, Campbell initiated convoying in the Southern theater when all St. Marys gunboats were sent to Savannah to escort thirty-six coasting vessels.⁴³ In August 1814, Campbell reported the capture of six American coasting vessels by boats from a British frigate. Cannon fire from gunboats chased off two of the boats. Campbell noted:

*The facility with which a cruiser can run from one inlet to another renders this Marauding System of Warfare easy. It does not require more than one & a half to two hours to row the distance, while a Gun vessel could not perform it inland in less than two tides at least but more frequently two days. The Gun vessels are constantly in motion, they are not allowed a Moment’s time in port beyond that which is required to receive their supplies &c . . .*⁴⁴

The British continued to harass inland navigation. By September, enemy strength had increased to a two-decker, a frigate, a brig, and a schooner. Campbell could not protect all inland navigation and inlets, and he instituted a strict convoy system. He directed gunboats to sail “in company, not less than four in number and the whole while the Enemy appear in such force. . . .” He also published the dates during which inland trade would be protected.

Despite setbacks, including the capture of No. 160 (overwhelmed by two hundred British seamen in ten boats), the convoy system worked well. In mid-October, Campbell estimated that over the previous three months his gunboats had protected almost \$6,000,000 in property, including one convoy of eighty-eight vessels. Campbell pointed out the importance of this to the national treasury, but lamented that his resources were “so

deficient.” Also, the toll on gunboat crews was heavy: “These marshes and rivers destroy our men in the summer season beyond calculation. Numbers have died. . . .”⁴⁵

Despite institution of the convoy system, some captains risked sailing alone. In the last two weeks of November 1814, the British captured fourteen vessels sailing without gunboat protection from Savannah, Charleston, and Amelia.⁴⁶

Despite their shortcomings, Campbell defended the gunboats, noting “this is one of the waters on which they should act.” The problem was in large part one of numbers. Campbell needed twenty gunboats “to do justice to these waters.” He also wanted twelve fast rowing boats.⁴⁷ Despite insufficient numbers and poor sailing qualities, the Charleston and St. Marys flotillas captured more than thirty prizes during the war.⁴⁸

In the Gulf Coast theater, the few New Orleans gunboats played a key role in securing Mobile from Spain. On 24 May 1812, Congress annexed all of West Florida between the Pearl and Perdido Rivers, and Washington ordered forces at New Orleans to take Mobile. Captain John Shaw sent all five serviceable gunboats there with two hundred forty seamen and Marines.⁴⁹

The naval expedition sailed from Pass Christian on the night of 8 April. It arrived off Mobile three days later and landed four hundred troops below Fort Charlotte guarding the city. On the evening of the 14th, Shaw anchored his gunboats within two hundred yards of the fort, threatening attack. The fort was only lightly defended, and the next day the Spanish surrendered and immediately sailed for Pensacola. Mobile, the only permanent territorial gain for the United States during the war, had been secured thanks to the gunboats; however, its acquisition further strained Shaw’s meager resources.⁵⁰

Toward the end of the war, the British planned attacks on both Mobile and New Orleans. The latter would have been a considerable prize; its warehouses were filled with goods, and the cotton there alone was valued at \$15 million. Vice Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane’s plan included fo-

menting a slave revolt in Georgia and arming the Creeks and Choctaws. They and a large British force would then move overland to cut off New Orleans.⁵¹

British plans went awry in the summer of 1814. Although Cochrane ordered the occupation of Pensacola and armed the Indians, the latter refused to march without a large British force. Meanwhile, Major General Andrew Jackson, commander of the Seventh Military District since May 1814, was distracted by Cochrane’s efforts to raise the Indians and by an unsuccessful British naval descent on Fort Bowyer at the entrance of Mobile Bay in September.

Jackson’s troops occupied Pensacola on 7 November. This prevented use of the harbor by the British for a strike against the interior, but it left American troops stretched thin along the Gulf Coast all the way from Baton Rouge and New Orleans to Florida, and little was done to prepare defenses at New Orleans.

Secretary Jones, meanwhile, seemed more concerned about local Baratarian pirates than a British descent on the Gulf coast. When he ordered the schooner *Carolina* to New Orleans from Charleston, it was to attack pirates and end smuggling there. The *Carolina* arrived at New Orleans at the end of August. On 11 September, Master Commandant Daniel Patterson (who had replaced Shaw as commander at New Orleans in July 1813) sailed with a joint army/navy expedition for an assault on the pirate stronghold. The *Carolina* and all six New Orleans gunboats arrived at Grande Terre on Lake Barataria the next morning.

A number of vessels were in the harbor, and the pirates formed ten of them, mounting twenty cannon, into line of battle near the harbor entrance. Patterson formed his own battle line, consisting of the gunboats, a tender, and a launch. The *Carolina* drew too much water to cross the bar. Two gunboats grounded, but the other four entered the harbor. The pirates then hastily abandoned their vessels, “flying in small boats, in all directions.” One pirate schooner was fired by her crew, but Lieutenant Thomas ap Catesby Jones boarded her and put out the flames. A company of U.S. Army troops then landed and secured the pirate strong-



"The Gallant Attack and Capture of the American Flotilla near New Orleans, December 1814, in Lake Borgne, by the Boats of the Squadron under the Command of Captain N. Lockyer," Oil painting by Thomas L. Hornbrook. Photo courtesy of the United States Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, MD.

hold. The Americans also captured a pirate armed schooner, the *General Bolivar* (4). Her captain was unaware of what had transpired earlier and she was intercepted making for Grande Terre.

After burning Baratavia, the Americans returned to New Orleans with sixteen captured vessels.⁵² The next month, when he learned some pirate vessels were still operating from Grande Terre, Patterson ordered Lieutenant Jones to return there with three gunboats, a tender, and two prize schooners. This squadron took additional pirate vessels, including a schooner. Other pirate vessels were taken later.⁵³ Reducing the Baratavian pirates meant there would be no threat to New Orleans from that quarter.

Naval forces at New Orleans, even less ade-

quate than those ashore, were at least at the right place. To defend the city, Patterson had six gunboats, the sloop of war *Louisiana*, *Carolina* and two tenders of one gun each.⁵⁴ This was a far cry from the forty gunboats Secretary of the Navy Smith had recommended be sent there. The ten additional gunboats requested by Shaw, and not sent, could have changed the outcome of the Battle of Lake Borgne and foiled the British altogether.⁵⁵

General Jackson assumed that the British objective was Mobile and urged Patterson to move his squadron there. Patterson declined, pointing out that gunboats might easily be blockaded in Mobile Bay and that New Orleans had to take priority. Patterson also correctly predicted the British attack route to New Orleans via Lake Borgne and Bayou

des Pescheurs to the Mississippi River levee, then to the city along "a narrow strip of land."⁵⁶ He stationed his gunboats to delay the British advance and positioned his largest warships at New Orleans to work in conjunction with ground forces. Since all American ground forces were not yet in place, it was essential for the gunboats to delay the British advance as long as possible. His dispositions gained Jackson two valuable weeks.

As Shaw and Patterson had predicted, Cochrane chose the Lake Borgne route to New Orleans. Its chief liability was that most of the water there was shallow and troops would have to be transported to their landing points in small boats and barges.

Patterson stationed his five gunboats on Lake Borgne under command of Lieutenant Thomas ap Catesby Jones, who also had two tenders for detached service. The British naval force arrived off Ship Island in Mississippi Sound beginning on 8 December and Jones's gunboats kept up a surveillance. In order to transport his seven thousand men into Lake Pontchartrain, Cochrane would have to defeat what he referred to as "this formidable flotilla."⁵⁷

It was not until the thirteenth that the British moved. In mid-morning of that day, Jones discovered "a large Flotilla of Barges" making for his gunboats. Jones tried to get his squadron west, but westwardly winds had left the lake "uncommonly low." The crews jettisoned all unnecessary weight and, by mid-afternoon, the flood tide had increased to the point where the gunboats were able to get underway for the Petites Coquilles.

Jones' hope of getting his gunboats to the Petites Coquilles was prevented by lack of wind and a strong ebb tide. At 1:00 AM on the fourteenth, he ordered the gunboats to anchor at the west end of the Malheureux Islands passage and there give the enemy "as warm a reception as possible."⁵⁸

Jones arranged his force in "close line abreast" athwart the channel. They were anchored at the stern with springs on their cables and boarding nets triced up. The British boats reappeared at daybreak on the morning of 14 April.

Soon after first light, the British boats weighed and moved toward the Americans. British commander Captain Nicholas Lockyer dispatched boats

to take the remaining American tender, which was trying to join the gunboats. The capture was easily accomplished, and at about 10:00 Lockyer ordered his flotilla to anchor beyond range of the American long guns for a much-needed rest and breakfast.

Jones gave the strength of his five gunboats as one hundred eighty-two men and twenty-three guns, and British strength as fifty boats, launches, or gigs, the vast majority of which mounted a single carronade or long gun in their bows. He estimated total British personnel at up to one thousand men. The odds, however, were not as overwhelming as they seemed. The American gunboats were larger and stationary, and they had some heavy long guns (fifteen long guns and eight carronades by Jones' count) able to engage at longer range.

At 10:30, "the Enemy weighed, forming a line abreast in open order," and made for the American line. The British had to row against the strong current that had worked against the Americans earlier. Unfortunately for the Americans, the current broke their battle line when two gunboats dragged their anchors and moved about one hundred yards eastward. This fragmented the battle, a factor very much to the advantage of the British.

When the enemy was within range, the Americans opened "a deliberate fire from our long guns," but the British boats were such small targets that little damage was done. At 10:50, the British opened a general fire from their entire line, and the action became general "and destructive on both sides."

Over the next two hours, the British used their superior numbers to take the American vessels by storm; chief weapons on both sides were pistols, cutlasses, and boarding pikes. When the British captured a gunboat, they turned its guns on the others.

Both sides fought well in the battle, exhibiting tenacity and courage. The American casualties totalled six killed, thirty-five wounded, and eighty-six captured. In their official report of the action, the British acknowledged seventeen killed and seventy-seven wounded, many mortally.⁵⁹

The Battle of Lake Borgne was as close as the gunboats came during the war to fulfilling their promise. They bought a vital delay in the British Army's descent on New Orleans, allowing the

Americans more time to build breastworks and strengthen defensive positions. Although British troop debarkation could now proceed unhindered, it took time to move the men in shifts, and their advance units did not reach the Mississippi, eight miles below New Orleans, until 23 December. Although Patterson's combat force was now reduced to the *Louisiana* and the *Carolina*, he used them skillfully to provide valuable gunfire support during the land campaign and further delay the British advance.⁶⁰

Ultimately, on 8 January 1815, the British Army suffered rebuff and appalling casualties in its land assault on New Orleans; but if the fifty gunboats proposed for that station in 1809 had been in place, there might not have been a land battle at all.

After the War of 1812, the gunboats were soon laid up or sold. On 27 February 1815, Congress authorized the president to sell such of the gunboats as were "no longer necessary to be retained for the public service."⁶¹ In early March, orders to dismantle their gunboats and barges went out to commanders at Savannah, Charleston, Wilmington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Newport. The only exceptions were two gunboats at Charleston, one at Philadelphia, two at New York, and one at Newport, "retained for occasional service."⁶²

Subsequent war service by the gunboats was slight, although some saw action against pirates.⁶³ Two Jeffersonian gunboats did play a major role in an 1816 campaign against Creek Indian and fugitive slave raids into American territory from Florida. With Spain powerless to prevent these outrages, the administration saw an opportunity to pressure that country into ceding East Florida and decided on force.

At the end of June, Major General Gaines, commanding U.S. troops against the Creeks, requested that Patterson provide gunboat protection for a land operation. Patterson instructed Sailing Master Jarius Loomis to take Nos. 149 and 154 (Sailing Master James Basset), to convoy the supply schooners *General Pike* and *Sinclair* up the Apalachicola River to Fort Crawford.

Early on the morning of 27 June, Loomis and

Basset worked their gunboats into position to shell a rebel fort, a regularly constructed fortification built under the direction of a British Army colonel. It mounted ten guns, including four 24-pounders. At the time there were about three hundred blacks — men, women, and children — and about twenty Indian warriors inside.

The fort opened fire first, and the gunboats replied. After ranging with cold shot, the gunboats shifted to hot shot. The first of these, fired from No. 154, hit the fort's magazine and caused a great explosion, killing perhaps 270 people. Only three escaped unhurt. The fort yielded an incredible arsenal, valued by Loomis at more than \$200,000, including 2,500 muskets, 500 carbines, 200 pistols, and hundreds of barrels of powder. After firing what remained of the fort, the gunboats left the river. For a time, war with Spain seemed a possibility. General Andrew Jackson's subsequent land foray into Florida, while arousing congressional ire, finally convinced Spain to sell Florida in February 1819.⁶⁴

A few gunboats also participated in putting down piracy in the West Indies, an upsurge of which followed the War of 1812. President James Monroe created the West India Squadron (1821-26), and in 1821, it included at least one Jeffersonian gunboat (No. 158).⁶⁵

The last record of any of the gunboats in service is from 1825, when No. 67 was at the Washington Navy Yard, employed as a tender, in poor repair. No. 95 was at Boston, also as a tender.⁶⁶

The Jeffersonian gunboats do not represent the triumph of a weapons system, nor were they a total failure. They delivered more than their critics anticipated and less than their defenders wanted. Too late to participate in the Tripolitan War, they were subsequently the major line of coastal defense. In peacetime, they helped to prohibit traffic in slaves and to enforce the nation's trade laws, and they served as receiving vessels, tenders, hospital ships, lighters, and transports for men and supplies. During the War of 1812, they did not fulfill the role originally envisioned for them, but they convoyed coastal vessels, particularly along the southern coast; they played prominent roles in

the taking of Mobile (the only permanent territorial gain of the war) and the reduction of the Baratarian pirates; and they delayed the British advance on New Orleans. They also had some success in protecting American coastal shipping from enemy cutting-out operations, and captured some enemy tenders. After the war, the gunboats assisted in actions that helped bring Florida into the United States, and a few took part in the West Indian campaign to eradicate piracy.

The traditional view of the gunboats as totally worthless is largely the work of Mahanian naval historians, such as Fletcher Pratt, who referred to them as “miserable,” “wretched,” “useless,” and “impossible wooden pots.” Pratt claimed that they “capsized on the slightest provocation and rocked so badly that the only weather in which they could fire their guns more than once in half an hour was a flat calm.”⁶⁷ Such exaggerated criticisms demonstrate frustration that the United States did not have a big-ship navy.

The gunboats were also a naval school for young officers such as James Lawrence, James Biddle, Lawrence Kearney, Jacob Jones, and John Percival. Thomas ap Catesby Jones spent seven years’ service (1808-15) in them and other small craft. The record here is mixed, however. Gunboat

service did provide command experience for junior officers, but it did not provide the training needed for duty in the larger vessels. As gunboats were mostly in harbors and coastal shoal waters, this precluded learning seamanship. Their commanders were often poor role models for novice officers; and because there was usually only one officer on board a gunboat, this worked against creating the professionalism that developed best where many officers served together. Most senior officers also believed that gunboat service encouraged vices.

While much of this criticism is valid, the desire of many young officers for transfer to frigates had something to do with greater creature comforts as well as the prestige that service on them entailed. As Christopher McKee noted, “for the professional naval officer this created a built-in bias against gunboats.”⁶⁸

Study of the gunboat program leads to the conclusion that the gunboats did perform useful service. It was the lack of larger ships, not the failure of the gunboats, that made the new nation so powerless at sea in the War of 1812. The Jeffersonian gunboats provided for all Americans an education in the elements of sea power, one the young nation would not soon forget.



Notes

1. Secretary of the Navy to Lovell, 6 and 18 July 1804, Entry 173, National Archives, Washington DC.
2. Preble to King of the Sicilies, 15 December 1804; to S. Barron, 22 December 1804. Preble Papers, Vol. 27 Library of Congress (hereafter LC).
3. Secretary of the Navy to Murdoch, 3 March 1805; and to gunboat commanders, 25 March and 12 April 1805. National Archives, Washington D.C., M149, 7; and E173, 126-127 and 146-148. For gunboats in the Mediterranean, see Dudley W. Knox, ed., *Naval Documents Related to the United States Wars with the Barbary Powers*, 6 vols. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1939-44), vol. 6.
4. Haraden to Secretary of the Navy, 14 April 1805. M124, 4. Albert Gleaves, *James Lawrence*, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904) 56.
5. Izard to Secretary of the Navy, 5 May 1805; Fanning to Secretary of the Navy, 6 May 1805; Henley to Secretary of the Navy, 5 May 1805; Elbert to Secretary of the Navy, 8 June 1805; Haraden to Secretary of the Navy, 9 June 1805. M124, 4 and 5. Shaw to Secretary of the Navy, 14 June 1805; and Rodgers to Secretary of the Navy, 6 July 1805; and 3 January and 14 July 1806. M125, 2, 3, and 4.
6. Lawrence to Rodgers, 15 August 1805. M125, 2; LC, John Rodgers Papers, Box 1. Also Gleaves, *James Lawrence*, 58-61. Depositions taken by

- James Law, James Murdoch, and James Maxwell, Tunis Bay, 18 August 1805. Rodgers to Secretary of the Navy, 21 August 1805. M125, 2.
7. Secretary of the Navy to Capt. Hull, 12 July 1806. M149, 7. William Smith to Secretary of the Navy, 26 August 1805. M124, 7.
 8. Frank L. Owsley, Jr., "Robert Smith," in *American Secretaries of the Navy. Volume I, 1775-1913*, Paolo E. Coletta, ed. (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1980), 85.
 9. Secretary of the Navy to Shaw, 20 December and Owings, 26 December 1806, M149, 7. Carbery to Secretary of the Navy, 15 January 1807. M124, 14.
 10. Secretary of the Navy to Decatur, 23 January 1808. M149, 7.
 11. Rodgers to Secretary of the Navy, 5 July 1808; Bainbridge to Secretary of the Navy, 9 July and 24 November 1808, Shaw to Secretary of the Navy, 6 August 1808. M125, 12.
 12. Murray to Secretary of the Navy, 20 August 1808. M125, 12 and 13. Charles Riddle to Secretary of the Navy, 14 September 1808. M124, 23. Secretary of the Navy to Dr. Samuel R. Marshall at New York, 8 August 1810. M149, 9. Hamilton identified the gunboat as No. 51, but it was probably No. 98. See letter from Rodgers to Samuel Rowenshall [?]. October [no day] 1810. M125, 20. Alfred T. Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812*, 2 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1905), 1:196; Gallatin to Thomas Newton, 29 November 1808, United States Congress, American State Papers: Finance, 5 vols. (Washington D.C.: Gales and Seaton, 1832-1861), 2:306.
 13. Reports of Secretary of the Navy to Congress, 24 May, 6 June and 1 December 1809. United States Congress, American State Papers: Naval Affairs (hereafter ASP, NA) 4 vols. (Washington D.C.: Gales and Seaton, 1832-1861), 1:193-194, 199, 202. See page 199 for varying times the gunboats were actually in service. Those in service at New Orleans had reduced crews.
 14. Claiborne to Secretary of the Navy, 14 December, 1810. M124, 39. Shaw to Secretary of the Navy, 3 January, and 15, 22 March 1811. M125, 21.
 15. Shaw to Bainbridge, 6 June 1811. M124, 42. Shaw to Secretary of the Navy, 22 June, 26 July, and 13 September 1811. M125, 22.
 16. David M. Cooney, *A Chronology of the U.S. Navy: 1775-1965* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1965), 30.
 17. Shaw to Secretary of the Navy, 17 February 1812. M125, 23.
 18. U.S. Congress, *The Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America*, 3 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1854), 2:426-430. Secretary of the Navy to Campbell, 24 December 1810, and 22 January 1811. M149, 9. Campbell to Secretary of the Navy, 7 January 1811. M125, 21.
 19. *The Weekly Register*, 3:19-22.
 20. Campbell to Secretary of the Navy, 11, 15, 24, and 25 April; 6, 11, 16, and 22 May; 4 June 1812. M125, 23 and 24. *The Weekly Register*, 2:93-94. Also French Ensor Chadwick, *The Relations of the United States and Spain* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), 115-116. For a more complete account, see Rembert W. Patrick, *Florida Fiasco. Rampant Rebels on the Georgia-Florida Border, 1810-1815* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1954), 83-98.
 21. This is reflected in the distribution of personnel. Of 10,617 men in the navy in October 1814, 6,512 were on the maritime frontiers, 3,250 on the Lakes, only 450 at sea, and 405 in British prisons. Charles O. Paullin, *Paullin's History of Naval Administration, 1775-1911* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1968), 152.
 22. Campbell to Secretary of the Navy, 4 and 18 July, and 1 August 1812. M125, 24.
 23. Secretary of the Navy to Murray, 20 March 1813. M149, 10.
 24. Secretary of the Navy to Campbell, Lewis, Murray, and Gautier, 26 February 1813; to Dent, 28 February; to Shaw, 1 March 1813; and to Murray, 8 March 1813. M149, 10. *Statutes at Large*, 2:821. Secretary of the Navy to L. Jones, 27 February 1813, Uselma Clark Smith Collection of the Papers of William Jones, quoted in Edward K. Eckert, *The Navy Department in the War of 1812* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1973), 25.
 25. Secretary of the Navy to Murray, 21 March 1813; to Stewart, 27 March 1813. M149, 10.
 26. Murray to Secretary of the Navy, 8, 21, 24, and 29 May, 16 and 20 October 1813. M125, 28, 31. Joseph Grice to Secretary of the Navy, 8 July and 7 August 1813; Thomas Seiper to Secretary of the Navy, 2 and 29 September 1813; Bernard Henry to Secretary of the Navy, March 1815. M124, 56, 57, 58, and 70. *The Weekly Register*, 4:273.
 27. In June 1812, Jefferson wrote President Madison and suggested that, in order to protect coastal trade, the United States should "line our coast with vessels of pilot-boat construction, filled with men, armed with carronades . . ." Jefferson to Madison, 29 June 1812, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, XIII:173. Knox, *History of the United States*

- Navy, 96.
28. Dent to Secretary of the Navy, 1, 2, and 17 July, 27 August, 15 September, 17 October, and 17 December 1812; and 8 June, 14, 17, 18, 24, 29 and 31 August; 1, 7, 23 and 30 September; and 8, 9, 25 and 27 October 1813; 1 January 1814. M125, Reels 24, 25, 29, 30-32, and 34.
 29. Murray to Secretary of the Navy, 7 March 1813; Gordon to Secretary of the Navy, 21 June 1813. M125, 27 and 29. Hull to Secretary of the Navy, 29 August 1814. M124, 30. Also, Logbook of No. 71. 22 October 1812 Record Group 24, National Archives, Washington D.C. Secretary of the Navy to Campbell, 10 March 1812. M149, 9.
 30. *Oneida* was the largest of the vessels built in the Jeffersonian program and technically not a gunboat. She was more than 85 feet between perpendiculars, weighed 262 tons, and mounted two long 12s and fourteen 24-pounder carronades. Until the spring of 1813 she was the largest warship in Chauncey's squadron. Chauncey to Secretary of the Navy, 1, 6, and 8 October 1813. M125, 31. It is not clear if Nos. 169 and 170 participated in the victory at Plattsburg on 11 September 1814. Four named galleys (*Ludlow*, *Wilmer*, *Aylwyn*, and *Ballard*), each mounting one gun, did take part in the battle. During the war, other gunboats were given names; possibly this was the case with Nos. 169 and 170. Rodney Macdonough, *Life of Commodore Thomas Macdonough, U.S. Navy* (Boston: The Fort Hill Press, 1909), 144.
 31. Hull to Secretary of the Navy, 15 July 1814. M125, 37; Lewis to Secretary of the Navy, 30 November 1813; and 23 February and 29 May 1814. M124, 56, 60 and 61. *The Weekly Register*, 5:254.
 32. Campbell to Secretary of the Navy, 3, 20, and 24 September 1814. M125, 38 and 39.
 33. Dent to Secretary of the Navy, and Bassett to Dent, both 31 January 1814. In *The Weekly Register*, 5:400.
 34. James Fenimore Cooper, *History of the Navy of the United States of America*, 2 vols. (Coopers-town, NY: H & E Phinney, 1848), 2:99-100. Cassin to Secretary of the Navy, 23 June 1813. M125, 29. *The Weekly Register*, 4:291-292. John K. Mahon, *The War of 1812* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1972), 119-120.
 35. Cassin to Secretary of the Navy, 21 June 1813. *Weekly Register*, 4:278 and 404. William James, *The Naval History of Great Britain*, 6 vols. (London: Richard Butler, 1847), 6:231-232.
 36. Cooper, *History of the Navy*, 2:116-117.
 37. Murray to Secretary of the Navy, 2 and 8 August 1813. M125, 30. Sheed to Angus, 6 August 1813; and James Winner to Secretary of the Navy, 10 August 1813. M124, 57. *The Weekly Register*, 4:375, and 422-2. The British version is in James, *The Naval History of Great Britain*, 6:236-238.
 38. Barney to Secretary of the Navy, 1, 11, and 24 May; and 16, 20, 21, 26 and 27 June 1814. M124, 62-64. In August 1815 James Sollers wrote to the Secretary of the Navy from St. Leonard's and noted "When the Enemy landed at this place he burnt two gun boats which Commodore Barney left in St. Leonard's Creek." Sollers sought permission to salvage their iron. 25 August 1815. Ibid., 73. Donald Shomette, *Flotilla. Battle for the Patuxent* (Solomons, MD: The Calvert Museum Press, 1981), 35, and 89-101.
 39. Hull to Secretary of the Navy, 20 August 1813. M125, 30.
 40. Lewis to Secretary of the Navy, 29 May and 7 June 1814. M124, 56 and 64. Log of No. 6, 24 May 1814, Record Group 24, National Archives, Washington D.C. *Niles' Weekly Register*, 6:224-225, 244, and 248.
 41. Campbell to Secretary of the Navy, 4 January 1812. M125, 34.
 42. Campbell to Secretary of the Navy, 5, 6, and 30 March, 14 April, 29 May, and 12 June, 1813. M125, 27 and 28. Secretary of the Navy to Campbell, 21 July, 1812, and 26 February 1813. M149, 10. Mahan, *War of 1812*, 2:195-196.
 43. Campbell to Secretary of the Navy, 4, 14, and 20 December, 1813; 2 and 4 January 1814. M125, 33 and 34.
 44. Campbell to Secretary of the Navy, 7 and 11 June, 20 August, and 2 December 1814; 18 and 21 January, and 3 February 1815. M125, Reels 37, 38 and 41.
 45. Campbell to Secretary of the Navy, 3, 20, and 24 September; 8 and 15 October, 1814. M125, 38 and 39.
 46. Campbell to Secretary of the Navy, 26 November, and 2 and 4 December 1814; 17 April 1815. M125, 38 and 39, 40, 41, 44 and 47.
 47. Campbell to Secretary of the Navy, 18 and 21 January, 3 February 1815. M125, 41.
 48. George F. Emmons, *The Navy of the United States, from the Commencement, 1775-1853; with a Brief History of Each Vessel's Service and Fate as Appears upon Record* (Washington D.C.: Gideon & Co., 1853), 72-73.
 49. Mahan, *War of 1812*, II:201-202. Shaw to Secretary of the Navy, 29 March 1813. M125, 27.

50. Shaw to Secretary of the Navy, 19 April; 12 and 28 June; and 11 and 14 September 1813. M125, 28 and 29.
51. Ernest M. Eller, *Sea Power and the Battle of New Orleans* (Battle of New Orleans, 150th Anniversary Committee of Louisiana, n.p., 1965), 7.
52. James Brown to Secretary of the Navy, 15 October 1814. M124, 66. On the Barataria pirates, see Wilburt S. Brown, *The Amphibious Campaign for West Florida and Louisiana, 1814-1815: A Critical Review of Strategy and Tactics at New Orleans* (University: University of Alabama Press, 1969), 31-43. The account of the expedition is in Patterson to Secretary of the Navy, 10 October 1814. M147, 5. See also Eller, *Sea Power and the Battle of New Orleans*, 13-15.
53. Patterson to Secretary of the Navy, 11 November 1814. M147, 5. Cooney, *Chronology of the Navy*, 29-30. There is no record of these in M147.
54. Knox, *A History of the United States Navy*, 130-131. Brown says the *Carolina* was sent to Patterson for the express purpose of an attack on the Barataria pirates. He also gives her armament as twelve 12-pounder carronades, and three long 9s; and that of the *Louisiana* as four 24-pounders, eight 12s, and four 6s. Brown, *Amphibious Campaign*, 10, 73.
55. Report by Secretary of the Navy on protection of New Orleans, 3 January 1807. ASP, NA, 1:162. C. S. Forester, *The Age of Fighting Sail* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1956), 267.
56. Brown, *Amphibious Campaign*, 48. The full text of Patterson's letter to Jackson is in Eller, *Sea Power and the Battle of New Orleans*, 17-20.
57. Forester, *Age of Fighting Sail*, 269.
58. Brown, *Amphibious Campaign*, 80.
59. Report of Jones to Capt. Patterson, in a letter from Patterson to Secretary of the Navy, 17 March 1815. M125, 43. For the British view of this action and strength of the opposing sides, see James, *Naval History* 6:356-360. James claimed American losses were 10 killed, 35 wounded, and 86 captured. See also George Robert Gleig, *A Narrative of the Campaigns of the British Army at Washington and New Orleans, under Generals Ross, Pakenham, and Lambert, in the Years 1814 and 1815; with Some Account of the Countries Visited* (London: John Murray, 1821), 256-263.
60. Patterson to Secretary of the Navy, 16 December 1814. M147, 5. The captured U.S. seamen may also have deceived the British as to American strength. Robert J. Hanks, "... the Ruinous Folly of a Navy," in *America Spreads Her Sails, U.S. Seapower in the 19th Century*, ed. Clayton R. Barrow, Jr. (Annapolis, M.D.: Naval Institute Press, 1973), 17. Also, Brown, *Amphibious Campaign*, 81; and Eller, *Sea Power and the Battle of New Orleans*, 37. Gleig states, however, that American deserters gave the British an accurate picture of American troop strength in the New Orleans area. Gleig, *A Narrative of the Campaigns of the British Army*, 262-263. Also, Robin Reilly, *The British at the Gates: The New Orleans Campaign in the War of 1812* (New York: G. Putnam's Sons, 1974), 226-228, and 237-239. Henley to Patterson, 28 December 1814, in A. Bowen, *The Naval Monument, Containing Official and other Accounts of all the Battles Fought Between the Navies of the United States and Great Britain During the Late War* (Boston: A. Bowen, 1816), 250.
61. Patterson to Secretary of the Navy, 3 March 1815, with enclosures. M125, 43.
62. Secretary of the Navy to Campbell at Savannah; to Robert Conley at Wilmington; to Robert Henry, commanding flotilla at Philadelphia; to Dent at Charleston; to Barney, at Baltimore; to John Orde Creighton, at Newport; and to Lewis, at New York, all 9 March 1815. M149, 12.
63. Patterson to Secretary of the Navy, 29 September 1815. M125, 46.
64. Patterson to Secretary of the Navy (with enclosures, including report by Sailing Master Loomis to Patterson of 13 August 1815), 15 August and 16 September 1816. M125, 50.
65. Robert G. Albion and Jennie B. Pope, *Sea Lanes in Wartime, The American Experience, 1775-1942* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1942), 139-146. Fletcher Pratt, *Preble's Boys. Commodore Preble and the Birth of American Sea Power* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1950), 310. John R. Spears, *The History of Our Navy*, 4 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), 3:331. Emmons, *The Navy of the United States*, 22. Cooney, *Chronology of the U.S. Navy*, 50.
66. ASP, NA, 1:804. Emmons, *Navy of the United States*, 22-23.
67. Pratt, *Preble's Boys*, 39, 51, and 98.
68. See report to Congress by Secretary of the Navy Jones, 11 February 1814. ASP, NA, 1:307. Christopher McKee, *A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession. The Creation of the U.S. Navy Officer Corps, 1794-1815* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 156-157.





A Means to an End: Gunboats and Thomas Jefferson's Theory of Defense

GENE A. SMITH

On 6 September 1807, President Thomas Jefferson wrote to his friend Thomas Paine that "Gun-boats are the only *water* defence which can be useful to us, and protect us from the ruinous folly of a navy."¹ It is this message and the gunboat program it represented that navalists and anti-Jeffersonians use to justify their claim that Jefferson was the standard-bearer of the antinavalist movement during the early national period. Jefferson was not, however, categorically opposed to the navy. During his administration, he accepted an important role for the sea forces, as illustrated by his ideas concerning gunboats and their function within the nation's defense system. His letter to Paine demonstrated his comprehension of the subject. He prescribed gunboats as the most practical defense the nation could possess, especially in light of British naval victories at Copenhagen and Trafalgar. Defense was Jefferson's major concern, and the gunboat program was the means to justify that end.²

Jeffersonian gunboats were not large, heavily armed seagoing vessels. Generally forty to eighty feet long fifteen- to twenty-feet across the beam and four to seven feet in the hold, they were usually armed with one or two, long 24- or 32-pound cannon, and assorted smaller guns. They were one- or two-masted, shallow-draft vessels designed to maneuver and fight in coastal waters, and considered defensive rather than offensive craft.³ Because of their limited sailing abilities, they have become the focus of the "white-water" versus "blue-water" controversy as well as the navalist-antinavalist debate of the Jeffersonian period.⁴

It is true that gunboats were primarily defensive weapons unlikely to become involved in

provocative incidents on the open seas. But, more precisely, they were a calculated defensive measure and were not intended to be the nation's only protection. Harold and Margaret Sprout, along with other historians, charge that the gunboats "repudiated the idea of maintaining a navy."⁵ But an investigation of Jefferson's defense theory reveals that he preferred a balanced, pluralistic force consisting of ships-of-the-line, frigates, smaller vessels including gunboats, floating, stationary, and moving batteries, as well as coastal fortifications, all working in unison to ensure the nation's security.⁶

Although Jefferson wrote isolated statements about the country's defense throughout his lifetime, the most complete exposition of his defense theory was his "Special Message on Gun-Boats," presented to the Senate and House on 10 February 1807. He reported that the nation's defense should be based on a combination of land batteries, moveable artillery, floating batteries, and gunboats.⁷ This message, coming near the end of his second term, did not truly do justice to his defense doctrine. All implements called for in this report were solely defensive, as it provided no reference to a sea-going navy. Through his years in office, Jefferson carefully avoided such statements. He was a consummate politician and realistic statesman who understood, especially after the *Chesapeake* incident of June 1807, that the construction of a sea-going navy had diplomatic, as well as domestic, ramifications.⁸

Jefferson's message to Congress did not reflect his true ideas concerning security. He preferred a more complete defensive arrangement

but, as always, his naval and military policy was determined by circumstance, or more simply, a calculated reaction to world events.⁹ Throughout Jefferson's administration, war with Spain, Britain, or France, seemed imminent, which made national defense a paramount concern. Passive military preparation included the construction of gunboats which provided security to a country that, despite the actions of other nations, was unprepared to build a blue-water navy.¹⁰

Jefferson's system, formulated piecemeal over many years, attempted to create a balanced defense for security. It included not only a navy of sea-going ships and gunboats, but also a system of coastal and harbor fortifications stretching from Maine to Louisiana. Jefferson was not the only one to recognize the need for defending the nation's seaports. Congress had first authorized a system of simple and inexpensive earthwork forts in March 1794. By contemporary European standards, these works were simple, weak, and they quickly fell into disrepair after 1800. Other attempts to complete works at locations of primary importance followed, but the building appropriations were always negligible. Not until November 1807 did the country embark on another major program of fortress construction; these works, consisting of open batteries, masonry-faced earth forts, and all-masonry forts, did much to prepare the country for the ensuing War of 1812.¹¹

While the construction materials may have differed, each fort reflected a similar idea — to protect the larger harbors from "more serious attacks as they may be exposed to."¹² Secretary of War Henry Dearborn realized that harbor forts protected the port from serious attacks but could not prevent an enemy from landing.¹³ Not even the fortress at New York, which Jefferson claimed mounted 438 guns and was "adequate to the resistance of any fleet which will ever be entrusted across the Atlantic," would be sufficient. The President concurred with Dearborn's observations and remarked that fortifications could become "bridles for an enemy to put into our mouths," especially if they embodied the country's sole defense.¹⁴

To supplement the system of fortifications,

Jefferson wanted "land batteries, furnished with heavy cannon and mortars." Although he did not believe these would prevent enemy vessels from entering a harbor, they would do much to prevent a port town from being damaged. Stationary land batteries prevented a vessel from passing a fort without tacking under some guns, be it the fort's or the battery's.¹⁵ John Shaw, naval commander of the New Orleans flotilla, 1806-1808 and 1810-1814, recognized the importance of a fixed land battery for the protection of Mobile Harbor on the Gulf of Mexico. He argued that fifteen cannons on Mobile Point working in cooperation with gunboats would provide "the best mode of defense that can be devised, against maritime invasion."¹⁶ Working as a part of the overall system, stationary land batteries limited an enemy's approach and provided a more defensible position.

For locations that did not warrant a fixed battery or a fort, Jefferson advocated the use of "moveable artillery" consisting of "heavy cannon on traveling carriages." He argued that cannon and mortars could quickly be moved to the bank of a river or beach to frustrate an enemy's landing or to drive a vessel back to sea. In addition, these weapons could be lent to seaport towns and militia trained in their use, thus perpetuating the militia tradition while lessening defense costs for the federal government.¹⁷ Moreover, they could serve in conjunction with harbor forts and stationary batteries to create a virtually invincible position.

"Floating batteries" comprised another integral part of Jefferson's maritime defense. Cannon on floating batteries, he argued, stationed to prevent enemy vessels from penetrating a harbor or to drive them out once they had entered, could create difficulties for an attacker. Jefferson believed that cannon, mortars, rockets or "whatever else could . . . destroy a ship," blocked the approach to a harbor and forced the enemy to sacrifice valuable resources to remove the obstacle before assaulting their target.¹⁸ In turn, this limited the resources the enemy could bring to bear on the port.

Other statements illustrate that Jefferson's theory of defense did not exclude a sea-going

navy. He believed sea-going vessels were required to harass and demoralize the enemy before they assaulted the land defense. "Brigs and schooners," he wrote, should "be free to cruise," especially "in time of war," because they could serve as a disruptive factor.¹⁹ Frigates were also an important feature of the nation's sailing force. "The wooden walls of Themistocles" were necessary for the country's protection, and not to be supplanted by gunboats. Rather, sea-going ships would complement coastal vessels.²⁰ In 1806, Jefferson even believed that "building some ships of the line" should "not to be lost sight of." For, as he understood, "a [sea-going] squadron properly composed" was necessary "to prevent the blockading [of] our ports."²¹ But he acknowledged that construction of larger vessels depended on congressional approval rather than any action he alone could take. This became apparent early in 1806 when congress overwhelmingly defeated legislation for building capital vessels.²² An anti-navy congress, rather than Jefferson, was responsible for the sea-going navy's setback.²³

The notion of brigs, schooners, frigates, ships-of-the-line, and gunboats working in unison with Jefferson's harbor defenses challenges the common assertion that he wanted to eliminate the navy. In fact, as early as 1785, Jefferson supported the navy and hoped that "our first attention . . . will be to the beginning of a naval force of some sort."²⁴ Navies did not "endanger our freedom, nor occasion bloodshed," he professed, but were a guard against foreign incursions.²⁵ His policy was to have "such a naval force as may protect our coasts and harbors from . . . depredations."²⁶ As such, Jefferson did not want to replace the "blue water" fleet with "white water" gunboats, but rather integrate all into a defensive system predicated on national security rather than exclusive emphasis on offensive potential or defending America's national honor in far-away ports. Gunboats fit nicely into this scheme. "In fact," as Craig Symonds claims in *Navalists and Antinavalists* "coastal defense was always the complete *raison d'être* for the gunboats."²⁷

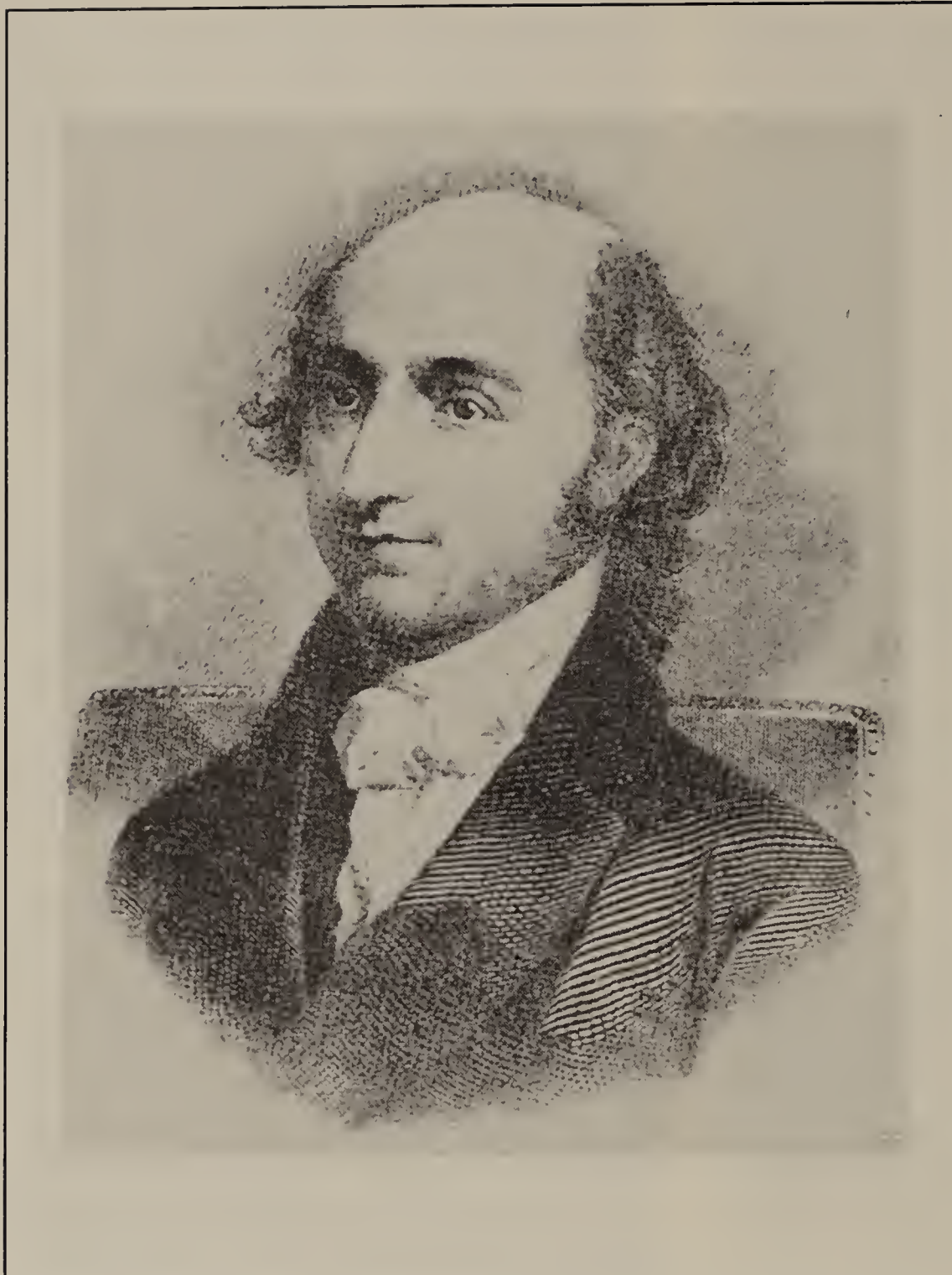
Jefferson desired a modest blue-water force to complement gunboats, coastal fortifications, and

other defensive works because he understood that war, as the "greatest scourge of mankind," could never be eliminated. Moreover, national leaders must bolster a country's defense to preserve the freedom and security of its citizens.²⁸ Jefferson wrote that his government's "policy and purpose is to provide for defense by all those means to which our resources are competent."²⁹

The perceived economic benefits of building gunboats instead of a blue-water navy strongly appealed to Jefferson, Republican congressmen, and a country with meager resources. This was especially true because Republicans believed reducing the national debt to be an integral part of the country's survival. Jefferson considered the republic's survival "as depending, in an eminent degree, on the extinguishment of the public debt." In other words, he wanted to reduce the national debt because of his personal situation, as well as his observations in debt-ridden Virginia. He also realized Britain's financial problems had produced the American Revolution, and similar troubles in France had spawned the French Revolution.³⁰

Should America not settle her financial problems, Jefferson feared the country would be "committed to the English career of debt, corruption and rottenness, closing with revolution."³¹ This concerned him, because he understood that revolutions produced "a host of admirals, generals and other officers," who sapped the country's resources or overthrew its government.³² Even after the wars or revolutions end, the expenditures continue, he said, prompting Congressman Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina to proclaim, "the war of killing prepares the way for a war of taxes, which never ends."³³ Jefferson knew his gunboat program did not stop the war of taxes, but he believed it lessened the drain on the nation's resources, and that strongly appealed to Republicans.

Treasury Secretary Albert Gallatin concurred with Jefferson's assessments and regarded the navy as the prime candidate for budgetary cuts. Gallatin argued that the navy was unnecessary because "the bravery of the mass of the people" would repel any enemy. During the last year of John Adams's presidency, naval expenditures totaled almost \$3.5 million, due primarily to an undeclared naval war with France. Gallatin



Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin. Engraving from the portrait by Gilbert Stuart, 1803. Reproduced from the frontispiece of Henry Adam's *Life of Albert Gallatin* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Company, 1879).

proposed to apportion less than \$2 million to the army and navy together, and in 1802 the navy received only \$946,213.24. Both Jefferson and Gallatin opposed a navy that "by its own expenses and the eternal wars in which it will implicate us, will grind us with public burthens, and sink us under them." The country could, Jefferson believed, make large savings by reducing the navy and without sacrificing national security.³⁴

While gunboats were built for defensive reasons, they also had economic qualities that

strongly appealed to Jefferson. Building gunboats was economical, while building a navy was inherently expensive. Jefferson could ill-afford additional debt, especially since Republicans had inherited an \$82,000,000 deficit or "moral canker."³⁵ The cost of building gunboats, originally estimated at about \$5,000 each, was an extremely attractive figure when compared to the frigate *Constitution* which cost \$302,718.84, or even the brig *Syren* which cost \$32,521.77.³⁶ In time, Jefferson learned gunboats armed with two cannons cost \$12,000, whereas those carrying one cost \$9,000. But by the time this discovery became apparent, the perceived short-term fiscal advantages of the diminutive craft blinded Republican congressmen.³⁷

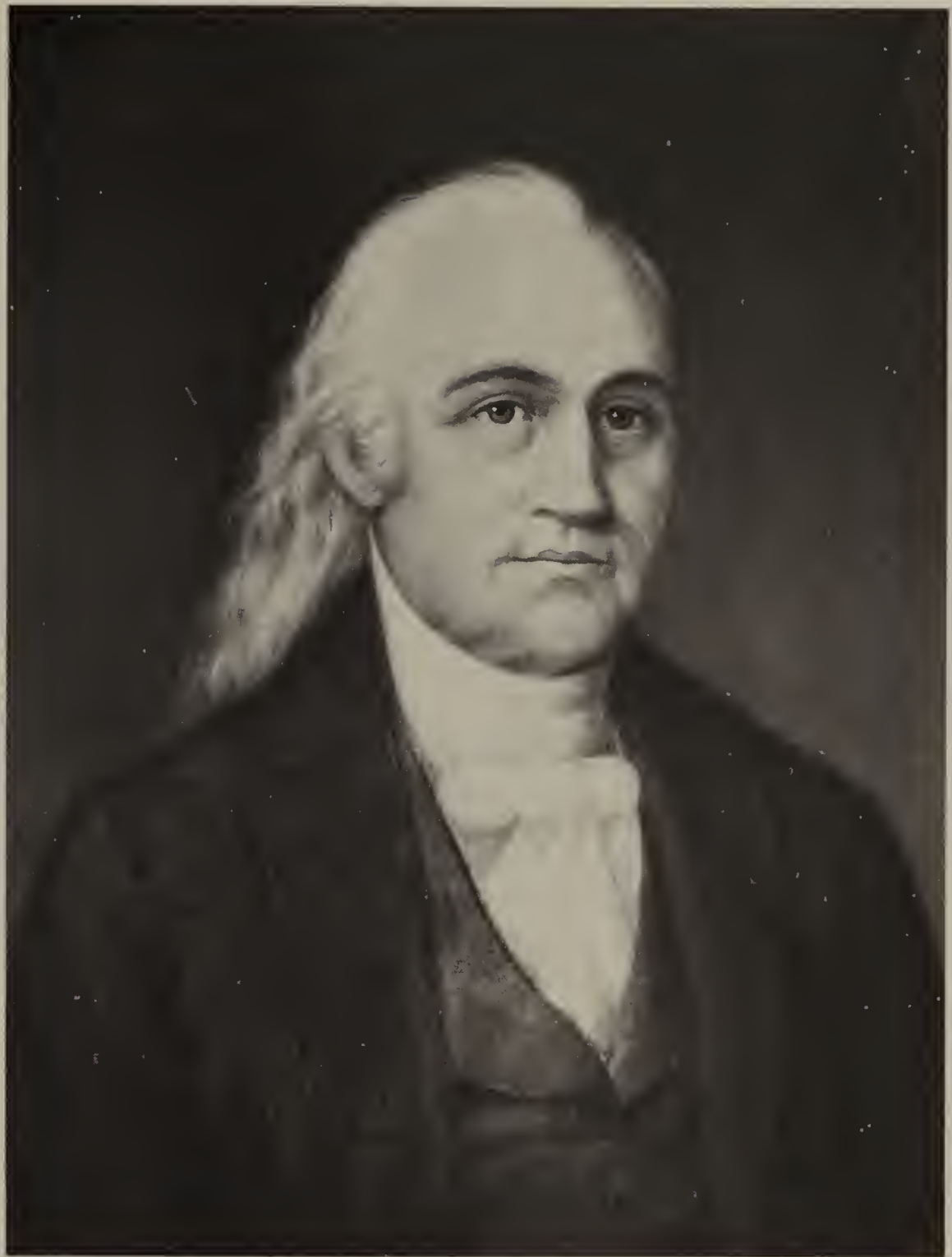
Gunboats, according to Jefferson, had many other attractive economic advantages. Navies, admittedly, were not only expensive to construct but even more costly to maintain. He repeated this belief to John Adams later in life, "a navy is a very expensive engine A nation who could count on

twelve or fifteen years of peace would gain by burning its navy and building a new one in time."³⁸ In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson had professed that the annual maintenance costs for the British Navy were \$1,280 per gun, or more than \$2,304,000 for the entire fleet.³⁹ Utilizing gunboats lessened the amount necessary for maintenance because the vessels could be taken out of commission and placed under small sheds when not in use.⁴⁰ Likewise, repairs also could be made more economically because deep-

water shipbuilding facilities were unnecessary.

Secretary of the Navy Robert Smith confirmed Jefferson's ideas about the economical attributes of gunboats when he reported that *Constitution's* annual upkeep was \$113,618.25 and the *Syren's* \$41,880.20, whereas the cost of a two-cannon gunboat's was but \$11,039.46.⁴¹ While it was true that a gunboat's annual expense was exorbitant on a per-gun average, those costs were reduced to \$2,147 per year when the vessel was taken out of commission.⁴² Since the country needed only a limited number of vessels for service during peacetime, the annual costs for the entire gunboat fleet could be reduced to less than the cost of maintaining one frigate.⁴³

Additionally, Jefferson planned for the gunboats to be manned by a naval militia, which would spring to arms at the appearance of enemy sails.⁴⁴ Using the militia, Jefferson visualized three scenarios for gunboats. The first was when the country was at peace. Under these conditions only six or eight vessels were necessary while the rest were placed in ordinary, incurring expenses only for the sheds to protect them and sentinels to ensure that no mischievous damage occurred.⁴⁵ The second situation presupposed the wars in Europe continued. If so, Jefferson believed the country needed about twenty-five vessels afloat, but with only enough men to navigate and care for them. The last situation anticipated the United States would be at war. In this case, the number of gunboats needed depended on the "character" of the war itself; regardless, they should be fully manned and ready



Secretary of the Navy Robert Smith. Portrait by U. D. Tenney. Photo courtesy of the Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC.

for action.⁴⁶ Using these simple criteria, Jefferson expected that the annual expenditures for the navy could be considerably reduced.

The defensive and economic attributes of the gunboats were impossible for Republicans to ignore. But there were other advantages that were not so obvious. Gunboats had political considerations that also made them attractive. Because they were small vessels, their construction did not require deep-water shipyards or a large pool of trained labor. Instead, they could be built on any river or beach where a supervisor could be pro-

cured and materials amassed.⁴⁷ This appealed to the predominantly Republican South and West, which had few shipbuilding facilities and limited skilled labor.

Ship construction traditionally occurred in the maritime region of the Northeast, where building facilities already existed. Not requiring large shipyards, gunboats would be contracted for in many areas of the country, thus becoming a powerful piece of political patronage for the Republican party.⁴⁸ Ultimately, the Jefferson administration distributed no less than forty-five different gunboat contracts to eleven states and the District of Columbia, which helped perpetuate the Republican idea of government for the people, rather than the Federalist government for the elite.⁴⁹

Another reason Jefferson supported gunboats was because he remembered some of the reasons his dry dock proposal had failed. In the fall of 1802, Jefferson supported the construction of a dry dock aimed at mothballing up to twelve of the nation's frigates. He concluded that this project would eliminate costly naval expenditures by economically preserving the vessels under cover. But when Congress debated the issue, members charged that Jefferson wanted to eliminate any future naval appropriations and contracts while concentrating the navy in one location, under the watchful eye of the government.⁵⁰ These suggestions struck fear in the pro-navy faction and threatened their commercial livelihood. Gunboats, however, should have theoretically ameliorated those fears. Built at various locations, their construction ensured the Northeast a share of future ship-building appropriations, rather than the "feast or famine" that went along with big ship contracts. The administration could also distribute the vessels to any location where there was a perceived threat. This countered the charge that the navy would be concentrated at one location.

Because many gunboats could be constructed for the price of a single frigate, the money expended for the small craft served double duty. For example, a \$300,000 frigate could only be at one place at a given time, and then only operate from deep-water ports. This left many areas unde-

fended. For the same amount expended on a frigate, numerous gunboats could be built and distributed to several locations, providing perceived security to many areas at once. Additionally, gunboats were not restricted to deep-water ports, but were even "serviceable to the headwaters of nearly all rivers."⁵¹ This provided each locale, regardless of importance, with its own defense and helped further the idea of equality, because each threatened region warranted some protection. In this respect, gunboats calmed fears concerning possible attacks and, although they were not frigates or ships-of-the-line, their ability to make a presence offered a strong argument for Jefferson's overall defense program.

Another advantage was that gunboats were not limited solely to defensive operations; they could serve in an offensive or preventive capacity. In August 1808, Jefferson professed that gunboats could strike "the shore in an instant," to seize land from Spain "as a reprisal for spoliations." Furthermore, Jefferson declared they could be used against pirates and smugglers, and their shallow-draft construction made them ideal for that purpose. These lawless adventurers evaded larger ships by slipping across shoals where they could not be followed. Gunboats could continue the chase and confront those vessels carrying on illegal activities. As such, Jefferson comprehended they would keep the "West India pirates in order" as well as limit the activities of privateers in coastal waters.⁵²

Once Congress passed the Non-Intercourse Act, the Embargo Law, and the Non-Importation Act, the gunboats' principal duties included enforcing revenue laws and suppressing "illicit trade" or smuggling.⁵³ They were also employed to prevent other nations from violating American neutrality. Gunboats, working in conjunction with revenue cutters, were essential in efforts to uphold the country's anti-trade manifestos.⁵⁴ While frigates and ships-of-the-line attempted these duties, because their draft prohibited them from coming near shore and their locations were usually advertised, they had limited success. The ease with which violators could avoid larger ships provided an additional rationale for the gunboats' existence.



Gunboats such as these depicted in Benson J. Lossing's *Pictorial Field Book of the War of 1812* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1869) were a primary component of Jefferson's defense system. Photo courtesy of the Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC.

The gunboat's size and design allowed the vessels to serve in various capacities. Their shallow-draft provided mobility and accessibility unmatched by larger ships, which made them ideal for coastal and riverine service, especially in the Gulf region. They could operate virtually at all times because they were supposed to be equipped with both sail and oars. This meant lack of wind did not hinder their movement. In contrast, larger vessels were forced to retire until favorable winds prevailed.

The "great desideratum in building gunboats, [was] to prepare them well for fighting."⁵⁵ They were "for home defense," whereas "ships [were] for distant expeditions."⁵⁶ The President admitted that gunboats were "proposed merely for defensive operations," and for that reason they were ridiculed by those "who wished for engines of offense."⁵⁷ A gunboat had limited offensive potential. Many maintained that the most gunboats could do, whether working alone or in groups, was to be an "annoyance."⁵⁸ They could not scour

the open seas waiting for their prey, for on the open seas *they* were prey. As long as they protected the coast, gunboats escaped the possibilities of potential conflicts. If the gunboats worked within the confines of Jefferson's passive coastal defensive system, they were, he wrote, "the humble, the ridiculed, but the formidable gunboats . . ." which ultimately made our harbors "*hors d'insulte*." [beyond attack]⁵⁹

Gunboats did have their drawbacks. They did not provide young men with the chance to learn seamanship, a naval environment for training professional officers, or the opportunity to gain a naval "mentality."⁶⁰ Some felt the craft provided little nautical experience or believed they produced derelict seamen. Others disliked the vessels because of the difficulty they experienced in recruiting seamen. Gunboats generally did not provide the opportunity for glory or prize money that larger ships offered.

Their size and seaworthiness fostered other complaints. Henry Adams characterized the gun-

boats as “not wide enough to lie straight in, with the certainty of oversetting or running ashore or being sunk, in case of bad weather or hostile attack.”⁶¹ Furthermore, a gunboat’s efficiency decreased in direct proportion to how far she sailed into the open seas and when at sea the vessels generally had to stow her guns to maintain seaworthiness.⁶² In fact, a gunboat under Stephen Decatur’s command capsized in a brisk wind and sank in only six fathoms of water. This prompted him to ask a fellow captain, “what would be the real national loss if all gunboats were sunk in a 100 fathoms of water.”⁶³ Obviously gunboats could not adequately handle rough waters and would never be decisive on the open seas. On the other hand, Jefferson had not intended such. He proposed them for defensive purposes, which made any additional service they rendered an added benefit.⁶⁴

There are valid reasons to condemn Jefferson’s gunboat program as it developed, and it can be viewed as a failure in light of the President’s original conception of how the vessels should be integrated into the nation’s defense. On another level, the craft did not inspire confidence from either their commanders and crews or from the people. Most ridiculed them and placed little emphasis on their capabilities. But just as Jefferson’s gunboats are viewed with contempt today, so is his theory of defense. Few accept what Jefferson wanted to accomplish with the gunboats. He did not intend them to be a replacement for a sea-going navy, but rather an adjunct to the regular fleet within a multi-faceted defense system. This is difficult to understand, because the United States has since become a world maritime power. Moreover, the country has not been invaded since the War of 1812 and few Americans have feared territorial encroachment by other nations. But in Jefferson’s age, Napoleon Bona-

parte’s armies marched through European countries much like Hitler’s did over a century later. In each case, although the Atlantic Ocean provided defense for the United States, it did not ensure absolute security. Jefferson simply wanted to provide security for his countrymen in what he believed the best possible way, a strong defense.

It should be remembered that Thomas Jefferson is, according to historian Merrill Peterson, “one of those men about whom the last word can never be said . . . he demands continual restudy and reevaluation.”⁶⁵ Just as Jefferson’s life demands reevaluation, so do his views on gunboats and defense. His naval defense theory cannot be condensed into a black-and-white dichotomy between sea-going vessels and gunboats. Such an assertion is groundless, as evidenced by Albert Gallatin’s statement that “federal papers” were trying to spread the idea that gunboats were “intended as a substitute to the navy.”⁶⁶ Gunboats were not a substitute to the sea-going navy, but rather one part of a sophisticated defense system predicated on national security. For better or worse, Jefferson stressed defensive security, and gunboats provided a means to that end.



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Notes

1. Jefferson to Thomas Paine, 6 September 1807, Jefferson MSS., Library of Congress (hereafter LC).
2. Gene A. Smith, “‘The Ruinous Folly of a Navy:’ A History of the Jeffersonian Gunboat Program,”

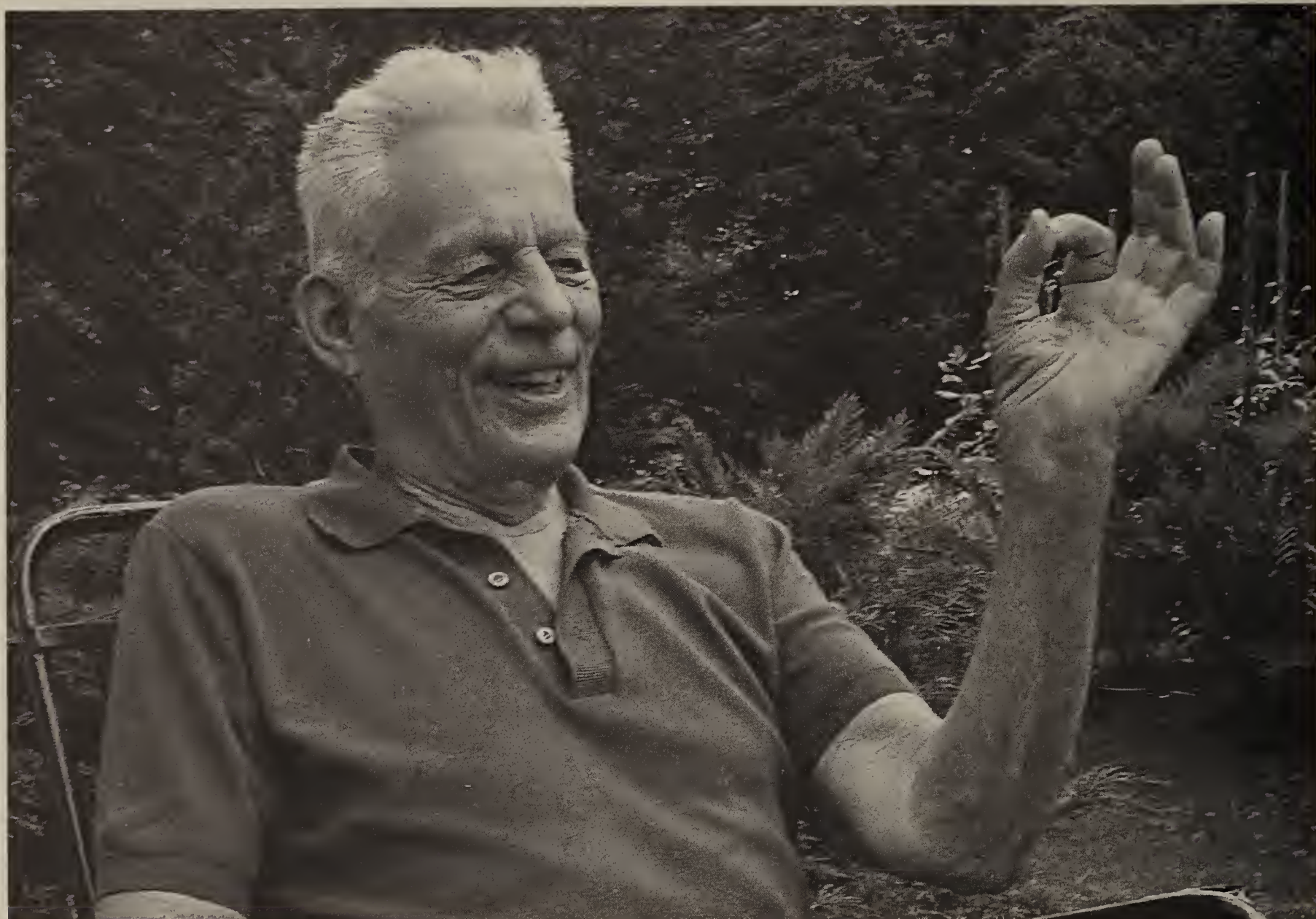
- (Ph.D. diss., Auburn University, 1991), 1-11.
3. Howard I. Chapelle, *History of the American Sailing Navy* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1949), 179-241.
 4. Craig Symonds, *Navalists and Antinavalists: The Naval Policy Debate in the United States, 1785-1827* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1980), 105-130; Julia H. Macleod, "Jefferson and the Navy: A Defense," *Huntington Library Quarterly* (1944-45)8:153-184.
 5. Harold and Margaret Sprout, *The Rise of American Naval Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), 60; Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Sea Power and its Relations to the War of 1812*, 2 vols. (1905; reprint ed., New York: Haskell House Publishers, Ltd., 1969), 1:187-188, 296; Frederick C. Leiner, "The 'Whimsical Phylosophic President' and His Gunboats," *The American Neptune* 43 (Fall, 1983): 266. Leiner claims that Jefferson's "neglect of the regular navy for an unfounded, untested gunboat system . . . came close to undoing his country."
 6. *Ibid.*, 245. He argues that Jefferson confused the means with the end and that mistake "can be studied as an example of the effect of individual human failing on national policy."
 7. Jefferson, "Special Message on Gun-Boats," to the Senate and House of Representatives, 10 February 1807, in James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, 20 vols. (New York: Bureau of National Literature, Inc., 1897), 1:407-409, (hereafter Jefferson, "Special Message on Gun-Boats").
 8. Dumas Malone claimed "Jefferson's opinion, especially after Trafalgar, that a strong seagoing navy would have been an utter waste was not as silly as certain later enthusiasts for seapower were to claim." Malone, *Jefferson the President: Second Term* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), xx, 496; Marshall Smelser exclaimed that "after Trafalgar, a lonely, microscopic American fleet would have been gold cast into the sea." Marshall Smelser, *The Democratic Republic, 1801-1815* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 229. Jefferson realized that antinavalist Republicans would not approve the construction of a sea-going navy despite his pleas.
 9. Symonds, *Navalists and Antinavalists*, 109-110. Before Trafalgar, Jefferson sincerely entertained the idea of using the American navy to balance power in Europe but afterwards there was no hope for it. As Congressman Lemuel Sawyer proclaimed, "The time was now elapsed." *Annals of the Congress of the United States* (Washington, DC: Gales and Seaton, 1834-1856), 10th Congress, 1st session, 9 December 1807, 1089 (hereafter *Annals*).
 10. Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson, *Empire of Liberty; The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 90. Citing Dumas Malone, the authors remark that Jefferson was "ready to use force eventually if peaceful methods to meet the imperative needs of his country should fail."
 11. Emmanuel Raymond Lewis, *Seacoast Fortifications of the United States*, 2nd ed. (Annapolis: Leeward Publications, 1979), 21-25. Lewis provides a basic description of the three types of fortifications, their differences and similarities on pages 25-31. Open batteries were small works in positions of secondary importance or near forts as supporting adjuncts. Masonry-faced forts utilized a combination of earth and an exterior scarp reinforced with masonry. All-masonry forts were granite-constructed, high-walled harbor defenses that implemented a casemated gun emplacement.
 12. Jefferson to Tadeusz Kosciuszko, 26 February 1810, Agnieszka Gliniczanka, and Jozef Paszkowski, ed., *Korespondencja; 1798-1817* (Wydawniczy: Panstwowy Instytut, 1976), 80.
 13. Arthur P. Wade, "Artillerists and Engineers: The Beginnings of American Seacoast Fortifications, 1794-1815," (Ph.D. diss., Kansas State University, 1977), 181-182.
 14. Jefferson to Henry Dearborn, 27 January 1806, Jefferson MSS., LC, quoted in Richard Alton Erney, *The Public Life of Henry Dearborn* (New York: Arno Press, 1979), 155; Jefferson to Mr. Nicholson, 29 January 1805, Jefferson MSS., LC.
 15. Jefferson to DeWitt Clinton, 29 January 1805; Jefferson to Mr. Nicholson, 29 January 1805; Jefferson to Governor Lewis, 2 May 1806, Jefferson MSS., LC; Jefferson, "Special Message on Gun-Boats."
 16. John Shaw to General James Wilkinson, 9 May 1813, 4 June 1813, John Shaw Papers, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, Library of Congress (hereafter NHF-LC).
 17. Jefferson to Mr. Nicholson, 29 January 1805, Jefferson to Henry Dearborn, 27 January 1806, Jefferson MSS., LC; Jefferson, "Special Message on Gun-Boats."
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“The Ship Without Liberty”: Mutiny and the Clipper *Contest*

STEVEN H. PARK

On the eve of the Civil War, the clipper ship *Contest* left New York harbor for a Chinese trading voyage circumnavigating the globe. By the third day out, the ship was facing strong winds and had started to leak. By the time the *Contest* reached St. Thomas, the crew had thrown overboard two hundred tons of cargo of lumber and coal, and the ship was leaking at a rate of eighteen inches per hour and sinking. What had begun as a leak requiring eighty strokes per hour had grown to two thousand strokes employing twelve men at the pump. On 19 March 1861, the *Contest* anchored in St. Thomas harbor, where shipmaster Joseph Steele recorded in the log that she was a “ship without liberty.” The seamen did not enjoy any shore privileges but were retained to pump the bilge and discharge the remaining cargo to make way for repairs as quickly as possible. When they did not receive the extra pay that was promised, they refused to do their duty. Twelve men were arrested and taken by the U.S. Consul to the fort in St. Thomas. Nine days later the sailors refused to come out of the fort until they were paid \$15 for the 15 days that they had worked to discharge the cargo so that the leak could be found.¹ The U.S. Consul in St. Thomas called it a mutiny.

Historian Leonard Guttridge traces the origins of the word *mutiny* back to the sixteenth century. The word implies collective action or a conspiracy.² Legally, the word implies the work of more than one person. Edmund Fuller, in his 1953 anthology *Mutiny!*, relies on the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition and notes that insubordination and disobedience by one individual do not constitute mutiny. Mutiny is a “revolt or insurrection by subordinates against a specific authority.”³ While

a revolution is defined as an impersonal attack on an existing system, a mutiny on board a ship has a strong personal component because of the close working relationship of officers and men. Marxist theorists have placed mutiny in the context of class struggle, while Fuller believes that mutiny is in human nature.

Guttridge, like Fuller, ties insubordination into the very nature of human beings back to infancy. He even mentions the biblical story of Eden and the inability of Adam and Eve to obey even the simplest commands from a divine authority.⁴ Fuller makes the distinction between two different categories of mutiny. Those serving in armies, navies, or as civilians on the sea have to submit to legitimate legal authority, making mutiny an illegal act. Those held in slavery or as prisoners of war, however, are deemed morally courageous in their attempts to revolt or escape from their captors.⁵ Certainly, one could argue that before the 1915 Seaman’s Act, many U.S. sailors were virtual prisoners to their contracts with owners and merchants. Guttridge put the intent of mutineers on a continuum, beginning with the refusal to obey, conspiracy, work stoppage, overthrow of authority, and finally, seizure of a ship.⁶

Despite its varied uses today, the term *mutiny* is still most closely identified with the sea. Folklore and scholars have attributed maritime insurrection to a number of possible causes. The conditions aboard a ship lacking modern sanitary practices and refrigerated food could tire the most seasoned sailor. Even the lime juice served to British sailors to prevent scurvy was often a cheap imitation and did not prevent the ubiquitous disease.⁷ Poor ventilation and smoky, dirty sources of lighting made



Clipper ship *Contest*. Built in New York in 1852, she was burned by the Confederate commerce raider *Alabama* in 1863. Photo courtesy of the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA.

the fo'c'sle a damp, smelly, and oppressive living area for the crew. The physical closeness on a ship provided an ideal environment for increased tension and conspiracy with others.⁸

If the living conditions did not provide an adequate incentive for widespread dissatisfaction among the crew, sometimes the captain did. Some shipmasters hoped that their crew would desert the ship so that they could keep a larger portion of the ship's profit. If wages were paid at the end of a voyage, as they often were, they were divided according to percentages agreed upon at the start of the trip. If a crew member died or disappeared near the end of a voyage, the officers might benefit financially from his absence.

Some shipmasters also conspired with boarding-house keepers or "crimps." A crimp might bring a sailor to a captain, who would pay

a portion of the sailor's future wages to the crimp for lodging, food, and drink debts he had accrued at a boarding house. Depending upon how much that sailor had to drink the night before, he might not have been completely aware of the terms of the transaction. Sailors could spend months at sea working off this debt and harboring no small amount of resentment against those in authority.⁹

Those mutinies that have been celebrated in literature and on the silver screen frequently emphasized the failure of command as the primary cause of mutiny. Often a hardened old cynical captain or a sadistic first mate would compel an otherwise peaceful and compliant crew to violence and retaliation. While officers no doubt abused their authority on occasion, there is also evidence of premeditated mutiny in which the plotting began before the ship even sailed. Piratical mutinies were

planned in advance by crew members who had previous knowledge about the value of the cargo. Foreign governments conspired to undermine the official voyages of other countries by infiltrating their crews with men ordered to mutiny. Several crew members, for instance, had been persuaded by the King of Portugal to cause a mutiny on Magellan's voyage around the world. King Charles had given the great navigator the authority to use capital punishment if necessary. Two of the ring-leaders were put in irons, and the one named Cartagena was executed on the Colombian coast near the site of the city that still bears his name.¹⁰

The years 1820-1920 marked a remarkable change in society's perception of the gravity of a seaman's failure to obey an order. Jeffrey Bolster described the American ship in 1820 as a "medieval mercantile enterprise" and a "feudal fiefdom" with the captain as lord of the manor. In the late nineteenth century, some men in merchant service were able to rise through the ranks, showing that social mobility could take place. Class distinction was decreasing in importance and these new shipmasters were increasingly accepted by the industry. Progressive reformers and labor organizers started speaking out for the rights of the working class during the last decade of the nineteenth century. During the early twentieth century, American merchants witnessed the breakdown of traditional class lines on board their trading vessels. According to a tradition inherited from the British, American ships had long carried "commoners" or "laborers" in the forward compartment, while the "gentlemen" or "management" resided aft.¹¹ By 1920, the American merchant fleet was "complex and regulated." The men were no longer confined to the forward part of the ship and actually had opportunities for upward mobility. The latter part of this one-hundred-year period marked an increasing toleration for minor disturbances. Disgruntled men were allowed to desert; flogging was outlawed and probably died out in practice by the 1870s.¹² In addition, a class-consciousness was emerging among men in the fo'c'sle, resulting in a struggle for equal treatment under the law.

In the nineteenth century, most mutinies were not violent in nature and were easily quelled by the

officers of the ship. Seamen were frequently starved or flogged into submission. This collective resistance by labor using non-violent means would now be termed merely a work-stoppage. Such group work-stoppages became so common in the nineteenth century that they were hardly mentioned in the captains' logbooks.¹³

Both Briton Busch and Jeffrey Bolster have examined mutinies aboard American whalers for the same time period, 1820-1920. Busch treats the subject of mutiny from a labor perspective, and holds that many "mutinies" in the nineteenth century were actually work stoppages. He combed more than 3,000 ships' logs looking for incidents in which three or more crew members took collective action in refusal of duty or industrial sabotage.¹⁴ Busch thinks it unlikely that work disruptions and insubordination would fail to merit a log entry, noting that these episodes loomed large in the minds of the leaders of the whaling industry. This claim is further substantiated by the fact that each incident recorded by a U.S. Consul was also recorded in the ship's log.¹⁵

Busch's statistics confirm the likelihood of a work stoppage in the *Contest* on 8 April 1861. In his research, he found that more than 80 percent of the time, duty was refused in port or sabotage was carried out lying "off and on" a port.¹⁶ The four principal reasons for dissatisfaction on American whalers were also the factors that aggravated the crew of the *Contest*. The men desired shore leave or "liberty," and they were probably frightened by the unseaworthiness of the vessel. They had performed an unusual amount of extra work pumping water and discharging cargo, and the extra pay that was promised was not forthcoming. Although not one of the most frequent factors on whalers, refusal to work under a certain mate in the captain's absence was also one of the aggravating variables on the *Contest*.¹⁷ The sources, of course, have a good probability of anti-crew bias. Busch notes that the captain's log is not the ideal source for finding a fo'c'sle perspective, and U.S. Consul records show that consulates frequently failed to sympathize with the plight of the American seaman.¹⁸

The extra work created by a ship that was considered unseaworthy erupted into a more threatening exchange aboard the Boston ship *Chilo*. In

July 1859, the crew physically threatened the first officer when they were sailing off Singapore. They had been pumping a leaky hull at 450 strokes per hour (only about one-third of what was necessary aboard the *Contest*) when they refused to do their duty and began using mutinous language. The U.S. Consul came aboard and jailed the ringleaders.¹⁹

One of the most violent and well-known mutinies that took place during the latter part of the nineteenth century on an American merchant vessel was the fateful voyage of the *Jefferson Borden*. On 5 March 1875, the three-masted schooner set sail from New Orleans for London with a cargo of cottonseed oil cake (hardly the cargo of a great pirate's tale).²⁰ Captain William M. Patterson took command of an undermanned, leaky sailing ship that was in need of repair in the rigging; the ship ran into foul weather immediately and started leaking even more, requiring constant pumping from a small crew that was already overworked.²¹ The drinking water was contaminated with salt. Whether this was a result of improper storage during the storm or, as the sailors claimed later, it was taken too close to the mouth of the Mississippi River, has not been revealed. Rough weather and pumping were the same elements that fatigued the seamen of the *Contest*.²²

The crew of the *Jefferson Borden* also suffered from hazing by the officers. Patterson did little to stop this behavior, and the fact that the first and second mates were his brother and cousin, respectively, probably did little to inspire him to check their excesses. The crewmen also complained about the poor quality of the food and about the insects that lived in the fo'c'sle.²³ On the eighth day out, the captain struck a crewman named George Miller and put him in irons. The small, overworked crew resented any decrease in the labor supply on board the ship and believed that Miller was being treated unfairly. On 20 April, three crewmen moved to seize control of the ship. The first and second mates were killed and thrown overboard. The three tricked the captain into coming up on deck after dark by claiming that someone had fallen and broken his leg. The captain's wife suspected something was wrong and warned her husband not to go. He armed himself and was able to frighten the

men into submission until daylight by firing shots toward the noises he heard in the darkness.²⁴

The captain was able to injure enough crew members to cause them to retreat into the fo'c'sle. Clearly, there had been a serious miscalculation on their part. The captain proceeded to lock them in the forward house and shoot at them through the house windows. He was so angry that he poured boiling water down into a stove pipe until all three of the perpetrators were scalded and pleading for their lives.²⁵ The captain then sailed the *Jefferson Borden* on to England with no officers, numerous injured crew members in irons, and a badly leaking ship. He managed to sail the ship short-handed, and he even asked his wife to take her turn at the helm.²⁶ Upon arrival in England, the three men were extradited to the United States for trial.

On 15 May 1875, the trial began amid an increasing public awareness of the difficult living and working conditions aboard American merchant vessels. Progressive New England politicians, clergy, and labor leaders rallied behind these three men. They were outraged that the men were not allowed to testify in their own defense because seamen, like children, were considered wards of the court. It came out in the trial that Patterson was a hard man to work for, and that this was not his first mutiny. Even those who remained loyal to the captain testified at the trial that the vessel was not seaworthy, and the water was not drinkable. Some concluded that the brackish water had driven the men crazy.²⁷ Even with the support of many prominent citizens, the men were sentenced to death.

On 15 December 1875, President Ulysses S. Grant reduced the convicted mutineers' sentence to life imprisonment. Employers warned Grant of anarchy by foreign seamen on American vessels (one *Borden* mutineer, John Clew, was an Englishman and George Miller a Russian Finn). On the other hand, the Sunday School Union and the YMCA petitioned for clemency. The *Borden* case was reviewed by five presidents over a twenty-eight-year period, while the Seaman's Union and Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, continued to petition on behalf of the sailors.²⁸ Miller died in prison in 1894, while Ephraim Clark (one of the other mutineers) was released by Theodore Roosevelt in 1903.²⁹

Gompers taught Andrew Furuseth, president of

the Seaman's Union, a great deal about labor organization while they were pushing for the release of the *Borden* crew. Furuseth later succeeded in persuading progressive politician Robert LaFollette of Wisconsin to support the Seaman's Act, which President Woodrow Wilson signed into law in 1915. This "emancipation proclamation" for seamen made it possible for them to get out from under their contractual agreements with employers. The Seaman's Act attempted to address many of the nineteenth-century grievances that led to work stoppages. The working hours of the crews were regulated, and vessels, provisions, water, sanitary facilities, and living accommodations were inspected for cleanliness and safety.³⁰

Few regulations of this sort existed when the clipper *Contest* was built during the great building boom of the 1850s. The clipper ship design began appearing in northeastern shipyards in the early 1840s. While many companies later claimed their ships were "clippers," a true clipper was defined by her speed, not by the capacity of her hold. Typically, a clipper had a long sharp bow and raked masts. Many believed that these were the most beautiful ships ever built. The design is believed to have originally evolved from Baltimore privateers during the War of 1812.³¹

After 1815, American merchants desired to move away from their trade dependency on the great maritime powers of Europe. The habits of European colonial mercantilism were hard to break; nevertheless, American merchants looked to the Pacific for new markets. "Tea clippers" returned from China in the 1840s with their cargo. The 1848 California Gold Rush and the 1851 Australian Gold Rush sustained clipper traffic around Cape Horn and put new demands on the fleet for speed.³²

Maritime historian Carl C. Cutler described the dissatisfaction among the clipper ship crews during the early months of the California Gold Rush:

Captain Joseph R. Gordon took the Memnon out. She left Sandy Hook about 3 P.M. on the 11th of April, 1849, and made the fine passage of 19 days to the Line. She was off Rio Janeiro in 32 days and

*put into Montevideo May 26th, 45 days out, hand spike and belaying pins flying — "all hands refusing duty." Thus were heard the first murmurings of a rising gale of discontent that was to blow around Cape Horn for fifty uninterrupted years.*³³

By 1853, the California Gold Rush had slowed down and there were no more \$78,000 freights left.³⁴ During the height of the gold rush, even an expensive, heavily-manned clipper could pay for herself in just one trip to California. Needless to say, the demand for railroads into California was great. The steamship was also gaining on the sail-powered vessel. As late as 1850, a steam-powered vessel took forty-eight more days to sail around Cape Horn than the fastest clipper ship. Contemporaries claimed that steam was finished; it had reached its zenith and proved wanting. Steam power was disappointing because it was too slow and too expensive.³⁵ By 1860, steamships were closing the gap and California clipper traffic had fallen back to the level of 1850. The building craze had died down and wages in shipyards fell drastically. The great clipper ships had fallen out of the public eye, and the newspapers that once enthusiastically reported their feats now spoke mostly of politics, Southern secession, and Abraham Lincoln's election to the presidency.³⁶ After the gold rushes ended in the early 1850s, American clippers continued their voyages around Cape Horn and turned a smaller profit by taking the tea trade away from the British in the Orient.

Some of the men joining clipper crews were not sailors at all, but were gold prospectors trying to get to California.³⁷ The argument could be made that the crew members of the clipper *Contest* were merely looking for a way to escape from their miserable lives in New York and reasoned that St. Thomas might not be a bad place to get stranded. Two considerations cast doubt on this scenario. First, the *Contest* was not planning to stop at St. Thomas at all. Second, the men continued to pump the ship at anchor for twenty days after they had arrived in the harbor. If they had made premeditated plans, they probably would have carried them out right away.

A more likely scenario is based on evidence claiming that many clipper ships built in the early

1850s were in need of repair by the early 1860s. The *Contest* was nine years old in 1861:

*The great majority of the extreme clippers were from seven to ten years old . . . Wooden ships could not be built to carry the tremendous leverage of the extreme clipper rig more than five or six voyages without being rebuilt. Few merchants in 1860 could afford to rebuild their ships, and none could operate them to advantage if they had been rebuilt. The only alternative was to recalk [sic] . . .*³⁸

The clippers of the 1850s carried so much sail area that the tremendous leverage carried by the mast was translated to the keel using the deck as a fulcrum. The mast pulled away from the keel under this pressure, causing massive leaks in many of these vessels after only a few years of service. Surely, the inclement weather aggravated the leak along the keel of the *Contest*, but leaks of this kind were not uncommon after a few years of service, and the seamen were probably aware of this danger.

THE CLIPPER SHIP *CONTEST*

David C. Westervelt, of the shipyard bearing his father's name, designed the *Contest* and sold her to A. A. Low and Brothers of New York for \$80,000. She was launched on 9 October 1852 from the Westervelt yard.³⁹ The *Contest* measured 207 feet in overall length and displaced 1098 tons. She was one of only five A. A. Low and Brothers ships that made the voyage from New York to San Francisco in fewer than one hundred days during the famous racing period around Cape Horn in the 1850s.⁴⁰ While most clippers averaged about four to six knots at that time, the *Contest*'s maiden voyage in 1852-53 averaged seven and five-eighths knots per hour, making a round trip record that beat *Flying Cloud*. The *Contest* took one hundred days out, eighty days back, and fifteen days discharging cargo, for a total of 195 days. This record was later broken by the *Andrew Jackson* in 1859, a record that stands to this day for a mono-hull

sailing vessel.⁴¹ *Northern Light* was racing against the *Contest* on the return trip when *Northern Light* set the 76-day record that stood until broken by the trimaran *Great American II* in April of 1993⁴² William E. Brewster, who had made his career as a whaling captain, was the shipmaster of the *Contest* during those record-setting years.⁴³

While the work stoppage at St. Thomas was a less celebrated and less dramatic event in the *Contest*'s history, the refusal of the crew to do their duty is important to our understanding of work and discipline aboard nineteenth-century American merchant vessels. Traditional mutiny, the stuff of movies and novels, died out with the end of the age of sail. The need to refuel and modern communication systems have made "*Bounty*-style" mutinies a thing of the past. By the nineteenth century, piracy was virtually extinct.⁴⁴ Group defiance, such as happened on the *Contest*, became increasingly common in the nineteenth century and the punishments became less harsh.

THE TROUBLE ABOARD THE *CONTEST*

By 1860, many New York merchants could not afford the kind of overhaul their clipper ships needed. They made do with temporary solutions and reduced sail area, which sacrificed speed, to decrease the pressure exerted on the mast. With the declining status of the great clippers, merchants were not able to attract the quality crew and officers they had in the "glory days" of the gold rushes. Disciplinary problems increased among crews that less capable officers were unable to manage. The influx of immigrants in the 1840s and 1850s to New York also made for a more multilingual crew that hampered communication among the crew and with the officers. Given this context, the disciplinary problems aboard the *Contest* were not unusual.

On Sunday, 3 March 1861, only one day out of New York Harbor, six crew members of the *Contest* were found lounging in the fo'c'sle. The shipmaster, Joseph Steele, sent the first officer forward to return them to their duty. One man, by the name of Henry Steele (not known to be any relation), used "insolent language" with the mate

and struck him several times before being put in irons and moved aft. In his anger, he threatened to murder all the officers and sink the ship, and he repeatedly called the captain “bad names.”⁴⁵

While this kind of behavior might not have been so easily tolerated only forty years earlier, Henry Steele was out of irons by the next day and returned to duty. Already, the rough weather had begun, and the *Contest* was taking on six inches of water per hour, requiring 80 strokes an hour on the ship’s pump. The shipmaster’s log entry for 11 March was lengthy and hastily written; at 1800 hours, the ship required three hundred strokes per hour; at 1900 hours, four hundred strokes; at 2000 hours, six hundred strokes; at 2300 hours, eight hundred strokes; at 0400 hours, 1,000 strokes; and at 1000 hours, they were up to 1,300 strokes. At 1600 hours, the captain called a “counsel of all hands and officers,” and they decided unanimously to heave overboard some cargo to save the ship. Fearful that the crew and ship were about to be overwhelmed, they started getting the deck boats ready. The pumping leveled off at 1300 strokes and the crew ceased throwing cargo overboard. But the captain penned on 13 March that he was “much alarmed about midnight . . . ship making much more water up to 2000 strokes per hour.” Six days later, the *Contest* was safely anchored in the harbor at St. Thomas, Danish West Indies.

Joseph Steele had agreed to pay twelve men \$1.50 each to pump through the night and \$1.25 to pump during the day. When the captain went ashore to look for a place to store the remaining cargo while the ship was repaired, the first mate retired to his cabin, sick with a fever. In his absence, the second officer struck one of the men with a wooden stick and hurt him.⁴⁶ The men did not complain to the police. The next day some rum was found in the second mate’s cabin, which did not reflect well on his record, already tarnished by his behavior the previous day.

29 March and 1 April were both Catholic holy days, and the men could see the crews on Spanish and Italian vessels getting these days off. The resentment felt by crews from Protestant nations was expressed by Richard Henry Dana, Jr., in *Two Years Before the Mast*:

. . . and being a Catholic vessel, the crew

*had the advantage of them [holy days]. For two consecutive days, while perched up in the rigging, covered with tar and engaged in our disagreeable work, we saw these fellows going ashore in the morning, and coming off at night, in high spirits. So much for being Protestants. There’s no danger of Catholicism spreading in New England; Yankees can’t afford the time to be Catholics.*⁴⁷

The man in the fo’c’sle treasured the time he could spend mending his clothes, sleeping, or having any reprieve from the demands of the ship. The captain noted in his log, “Holy Day — difficult to get men to work.”⁴⁸

On 5 April, the ship was still not completely unloaded, and the pumping had increased to 2,800 strokes per hour. The rate of incoming water was now twice what it had been when the crew began throwing cargo overboard. The only comfort the captain had was that now he was safely anchored in a harbor with facilities. The first and third mates were both sick again, leaving the unpopular second mate in charge of the men while the captain searched for places to store the remainder of the cargo. Steele finally found a wharf that would hold the coal and planks for two months at \$150 per month. Nineteen days after reaching St. Thomas, eight men were finally granted shore leave. Henry Steele went ashore without permission, and when he tried to go a second time, the captain ordered him out of the boat. The shipmaster declined to punish Steele at that time, even though he had used improper language toward the captain.⁴⁹

The following day, all the seamen who were aboard the ship and not in sick bay refused duty. Joseph Steele sent for help from the American Consul, and a clerk and two policemen arrived later to take the men into custody. Four seamen from the *Contest* must have run into trouble earlier with the local authorities while on leave, because they were already being held at the fort when the others arrived. Steele had to hire twenty-five local men to get the ship into the wharf and to pump. The following night, Captain Steele dined with the

American Consul.

After spending nine days in the fort, the men were undaunted. They refused to come out until they were paid \$15 for their fifteen days of discharging cargo. Steele offered \$7 to ten men in the fort, but they refused to accept anything less than the \$15 promised to them earlier. The 20 April log entry reads, "I abandoned them to the Consul."⁵⁰

In his quarterly report to Washington, John Edgar, U.S. Consul at St. Thomas, inquired, "I beg to ask for instructions relative to the following points; as for foreign seamen regularly shipped in American vessels at a foreign port . . . payments of wages in case of discharge from a vessel and passage of destitute seamen to the United States."⁵¹ While he did not specifically mention the *Contest*, this request for advice would certainly apply to that situation. The *Ship's Daily Journal* of the U.S. Consulate did have an "order to arrest ten men" in the *Contest*. The Consul recorded twenty-three men ultimately deserting the ship, with eleven remaining to ship out again. Henry Steele's name was listed first among the deserters. The ultimate fate of these seamen remains unknown.⁵²

A carpenter was employed in the *Contest* to find the leak after the hold was emptied. After two days of searching, a wedge was driven into the principal opening. Steele concluded that the *Contest* should return to the Port of New York for more extensive repairs. She took on some ballast and a couple of passengers, left for New York at the end of April, and returned to St. Thomas for her cargo and captain one month later. Steele did not record in the log how he staffed the ship for this voyage, as he had remained in St. Thomas.

Joseph Steele again took command on 29 June 1861 toward San Francisco. Even with Henry Steele and the other deserters gone, the shipmaster's disciplinary problems abated for only a short time. A little over one month later, a crewman named James Brown refused duty and was put in irons. Five days later, he was still disobeying orders because he "prefers being in irons to doing duty."⁵³ Other sailors were punished for killing a shark without the shipmaster's permission.

After discharging cargo on the West Coast, the *Contest* headed for China by way of Hawaii. The transient life of the nineteenth-century sailor was apparent in the *Contest* log on this leg of the

voyage. Crewmen and officers came and went in various ports; some were discharged, some ran away, others just "left." The nationality of the crew changed as the ship moved from one continent to the next. Near Bangkok, a Chinese sailor fell from the mizzen royal yard and died instantly, the only death recorded during twenty-two months at sea. The *Contest's* log suffered some significant gaps and the handwriting changed during the time in Asia.

The *Contest* sailed back to New York by way of the Cape of Good Hope. Fifteen days away from Sandy Hook and the completion of her voyage, the *Contest* had her last recorded outburst from the crew. When the first and the third officers got into an argument, a seaman handed the third mate his knife and advised him to kill "the dam [sic] son of a bitch." The seaman was put in irons and locked up because he was a "bad man and a thief."⁵⁴

The experiences and difficulties in the *Contest* were not unusual for a voyage of that length in the mid-nineteenth century.⁵⁵ While irons were frequently used as a form of discipline, there is no evidence in the *Contest* log that flogging took place. Flogging had been outlawed in 1850 but was known to continue well into the 1870s.⁵⁶ This voyage was Steele's only commission with the *Contest*, while the previous shipmaster, William Brewster, a more experienced captain, had repeatedly sailed for A. A. Low and Brothers in the 1850s, when the profits were large and the ships were new.⁵⁷

While popular wisdom may frequently point to an inexperienced captain in the case of command problems, people were aware then, as now, that a variety of environmental, ethnic, and class factors also affected the group dynamics aboard ship. Contemporaries believed several different theories as to why a certain crew would resort to violence while another would resist passively (e.g., work stoppage, minor sabotage, self-inflicted injuries) given a similar set of circumstances. Arthur Clark, who had captained several clippers himself, wrote a book at the beginning of this century addressed to an audience too young to remember the "glory days" of beautiful clipper ships. He analyzed the

nature of crews according to their ethnic background. He praised the Scandinavian crews for their honesty, physical and moral strength, and the pride they took in their work. He referred to the ships with primarily Scandinavian crews as a "little heaven afloat."⁵⁸ On the other hand, "Liverpool Irishmen" were a wild, depraved, and obscene lot. They could only be ruled by an iron fist; their code of ethics considered cutting or stabbing an officer as heroic. Clark told his readers that these "dirty Irishmen" kept a filthy ship that needed to be overhauled upon return to port, unlike the Scandinavian ships, which were often in better condition upon their return than when they left.

Clark also related the violence and resentment on clipper ships to class and the ability to advance one's position aboard ship. He noted that American-born boys did not stay in the fo'c'sle for long; they were upwardly mobile. The native-born Americans could pull themselves up by their bootstraps and one day become officers. This should not surprise the modern reader, since sailors were working for American-born officers and did not suffer the language barrier and ethnic prejudices that the immigrant sailor faced.

Clark asserted that clipper ship masters had to be severe because of the kinds of crews they had. Sometimes the sailors were ex-convicts who Clark believed should have remained behind bars. Shipmasters, he claimed, had only the strength of their own character with which to enforce their authority.⁵⁹ This was not true, of course, as the case of the *Jefferson Borden* demonstrated. The captain had firearms, while the crew was disarmed before signing on. Clark argued that severity was the exception, and that fine seamen were valued by their captains. The problems in the industry, Clark believed, were the fault of "land-sharks," who took advances on the sailor's pay and sent him out on a voyage with no clothes in his sea chest. Clark portrayed the sea captain as a benevolent employer who gave a job, good food, and instilled a work ethic in rogues who would not otherwise have had anything. The captain was forced to recruit from the lowest rung of society because, by the 1860s, he could get no others to work on his ship. Competition from steam and the failure of merchants to maintain their clippers (which were related) tied the hands of the recruiter trying to find quality

seamen.

Clark's book was written from the perspective of a sea captain to an audience whom he believed would not understand the conditions under which the clipper shipmaster had to operate. He blamed the "sea lawyers," who believed outrageous yarns told to them by unscrupulous sailors. Land-lubber juries would believe the slander told about the captain and would award damages to these storytellers. The lawyers would actually wait on the piers for returning ships, forcing the captains to slip away from their ships to avoid prosecution. Clark complained that the progressive clergy and labor leaders wasted their sympathies on seamen who needed discipline when they should have gone after the rampant vice that went unchecked in the seaports. The city, not the sea, was the environment in which the seaman was a victim.⁶⁰

Clark concluded by arguing that the low technology of the 1850s required a tougher crew and a tougher captain than at the time he wrote (1910). He did not expect his contemporary audience to understand the primitive working conditions, now that sailors enjoyed donkey engines and steam winches.

While it is easy to criticize Clark for his ethnic prejudices, in his wholesale condemnation of those on land, and his spirited defense of those in authority at sea, he did touch on several different factors which help modern readers understand violence and protest at sea in the mid-nineteenth century. Clark was writing at a time when social science and environmental factors were increasingly invoked to explain human behavior. At the trial of the *Jefferson Borden* mutineers, a medical explanation was offered in the seamen's defense: the salt in the water had caused them to act in a violent manner. The nineteenth century was a period of transition for laborers and reformers in the ways individual agency and environmental factors were understood.

Technology and legislation played an important role in improving living and working conditions aboard ship. Violent and non-violent protests took place concurrently, bringing up the question; Why did some crews resort to violence and others refrain? The nineteenth century was not marked by

linear progress toward peaceful protest. Ten years before the *Jefferson Borden*, a crew on the clipper *White Swallow* seized control of the ship without any harm to life or property. They disabled most of the weapons on board the ship and disposed of all of the liquor before they carried out their plan.⁶¹ Why did some crews show restraint under difficult circumstances, while others mutinied under seemingly easier ones?

While it is difficult to collect the thoughts and intellectual life of the man in the fo'c'sle, his perception of individual agency and the role of the officers would certainly affect his response to conditions aboard ship. If he believed that the captain was purposely making his life difficult or (as was often believed) that the captain personally profited from cheating the men out of rations, violence would seem a more acceptable response. Character flaws were frequently cited as causes of mutiny. A certain captain was a "scoundrel" or a crew member was "bloodthirsty."

This is in contrast to the twentieth-century mind that has been saturated with the environmental explanations of social science. Now events can be explained as failures of the system, beyond the control of individuals. We do not pretend to understand all of the circumstances that affect our lives. This is not to say that seamen and officers did not understand environmental factors that aggravated conditions aboard ship. The largest and most famous mutinies in British naval history took place at Spithead and the Nore at the close of the eighteenth century, when Britain was at war with France. The demonstrations and negotiations were largely peaceful. The seamen had four grievances that existed navy-wide, none of which were directed at the officers in general. The resistance was directed toward "the system" and not against England. The sailors were actually so loyal to England that they agreed to sail and fight if France tried to take advantage of the stoppage.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, it was evident that the age of sail was coming to a close. Smaller crews were being worked harder to try to compete with steam. Merchants sent rancid food out on ships because they believed they could afford no better. Captains drove the men

hard in leaky ships, trying to make a profit in a dying industry. It is difficult to prove the extent to which the men in the fo'c'sle appreciated the "stream of history" and the extent to which events moved beyond the control of their captains and shipowners. Belief in individual agency and personal moral responsibility was declining in an age when social science was beginning to offer "scientific" explanations for human behavior that did not put a moral "spin" and personal responsibility on each action.

While the *Contest* is included among the thirty-one fastest clippers in the decade before the American Civil War, she is usually remembered for meeting her final fate at the hands of Captain Semmes and the CSS *Alabama* in 1863. The *Contest* was returning to New York from Yokohama, Japan, passing through the Straits of Sunda, an area that was supposed to be patrolled by a U.S. warship. The USS *Wyoming* was reported to be having engine problems and was last seen at anchor. When first sighted, the *Alabama* flew an American flag, but the *Contest* kept her distance. When the *Contest* was four miles off, the *Alabama* raised a Confederate flag and the *Contest* flew every inch of sailcloth on board. Under a freshening breeze, it appeared that the *Contest* might escape, but then the wind died down and the auxiliary steam power on board the *Alabama* decided the day. Semmes condemned the cargo and the ship was burned. The crew of the *Contest* was later transferred to a British ship to be returned to the United States.⁶² William Low, the owner, was paid for the loss in an Alabama claims court.⁶³ The *Contest* was not alone in meeting her fate this way; the *Winged Racer* was also destroyed by the *Alabama* off the coast of Java that same year. Many other Northern merchants sought to avoid this disruption to Union shipping by trading under another flag during the War Between the States.⁶⁴ The United States merchant fleet never fully recovered from this "flight from the flag."



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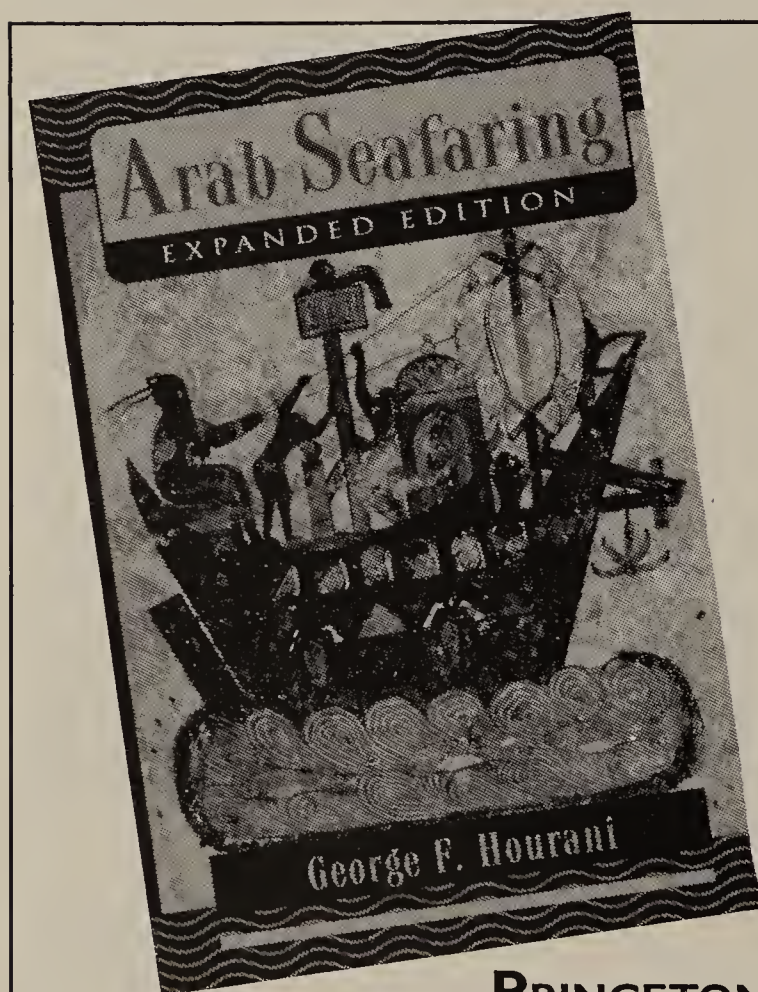
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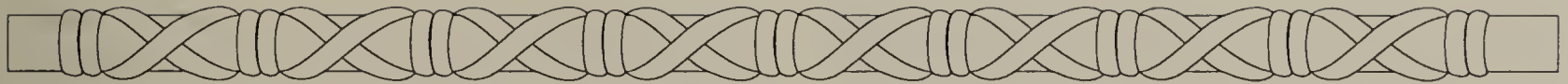
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The *Plattsburg* Mutiny, 1816

FRED HOPKINS

Lurking somewhere in the back of every ship's officer's mind is the knowledge that his crew might rise to mutiny and murder, if necessary conditions present themselves. In order to underscore the authority of the captain and his officers, nations have developed laws and treaties to deal with mutiny and murder on the high seas. In the early nineteenth century, however, the United States had not yet negotiated extradition treaties with the major European powers. What would happen if a mutinous crew fled to a foreign country and then claimed citizenship of that country? Could the alleged mutineers be brought to justice and, at the same time, preserve the sovereignty of the nations involved?

The case of mutiny and murder aboard the Baltimore clipper schooner *Plattsburg* in the summer of 1816 would bring into conflict the governments of the United States, Denmark, Prussia, France and Sweden. All would acknowledge the gravity of the crimes, but all would also desire to protect their integrity as sovereign powers.

The *Plattsburg*'s tale begins on 29 June 1816, when the clipper schooner cleared Baltimore for Smyrna, Turkey, with a cargo of 600 bags and 71 barrels of coffee, valued at \$30,000, plus assorted bags and boxes of silver and gold coins valued at \$50,000. Both the schooner and the cargo were the property of Isaac McKim of Baltimore. McKim's orders to the *Plattsburg*'s captain were to sell the coffee in Smyrna and then to purchase \$80,000 worth of opium for trade in the East Indies.¹ The *Plattsburg* was built in Baltimore in 1815, and measured 101 feet 5 inches in length, 23 feet 8 inches in beam, with cargo capacity of 237 tons.²

Shortly after midnight on 22 July, about four days distant from the Azores, mutiny erupted aboard the *Plattsburg*. Brandishing hand spikes and

barrel staves, the crew of twelve, led by John Sturmer, *alias* John Stromsky, attacked Captain William Hackett of Baltimore, supercargo Thomas Baynard of Baltimore, and first mate Frederick Yeizer. All three were murdered and their bodies thrown into the sea. Sturmer then took command of the schooner and appointed fellow conspirator John Williams as first mate. At daybreak, the mutineers brought the bags and boxes of coins on deck and divided the specie amongst themselves. Each crew member received approximately 3,000 Spanish dollars. The decision was then made to change course and head for Norway, a choice influenced by the fact that seven of the twelve crewmen were Scandinavian. After three more weeks of sailing, the *Plattsburg* approached the Norwegian port of Mandahl. Sturmer and Williams ordered the boom to be broken, giving the crew an excuse to land at Mandahl. A portion of the cargo of coffee was smuggled ashore and sold while the remainder was given away.³

Shortly after the arrival of the *Plattsburg* in Norway, news of the vessel reached Peter Issacksen, the United States' Chargé d'Affaires in Norway, who journeyed to Mandahl to take possession of the vessel and to arrest the crew. By the time Issacksen arrived, however, all of the crew had fled Norway with the exception of Nathaniel White.⁴ In late August 1816, three of the mutineers — Stephen Onion, John Williams, and Edward Sauberson — arrived in Copenhagen, Denmark, and were shortly followed by Jens Petersen Raag, *alias* Alexander Hanson. Onion, Williams, and Sauberson immediately sought out U.S. Consul H. R. Saabye for passports back to Christiana, Norway, to meet a Danish ship they had loaded with

sugar and rum in the amount of 1,400 Spanish dollars and sent to Christiana. By this time, however, word had spread of an American ship plundered in Norway and consul Saabye became suspicious of Onion, Williams, and Sauberson, since they seemed to have more money than was usual among common sailors. They also had no passports out of Norway. Furthermore, Stephen Onion was masquerading as the murdered mate Frederick Yeizer. Consul Saabye became even more suspicious when a comparison of Yeizer's physical characteristics from his papers did not match with Onion's. Although he had no official report concerning the *Plattsburg*, Saabye felt he had enough evidence on which to act and requested the Danish police to arrest Onion, Williams, Sauberson, and Raag. The arrests were carried out on 7 September 1816. During the ensuing interrogation, all four seamen denied any knowledge of the plundered American vessel at Mandahl. The next day, however, Edward Sauberson confessed to the crime, and Onion and Williams soon followed suit.⁵

Saabye immediately informed Issacksen in Norway of the confessions and directed him to impound the *Plattsburg* and to arrest any of the crew still in Norway. After a brief delay, Issacksen reported back to Saabye that only Nathaniel White was still in Norway and had been arrested. White, however, claimed Norwegian citizenship and was set free. After the official report of the mutineers' confessions reached Norway, Issacksen again requested White's arrest. Unfortunately, White had fled the country.⁶

Consul Saabye was not to prove lax in his pursuit of the *Plattsburg* mutineers. As soon as the four prisoners in Copenhagen confessed, Saabye sent a circular letter to his counterparts in Hamburg, Bremen, and Stockholm. Nathaniel White was taken into custody in Hamburg and sent to Copenhagen. Meanwhile in Gothenburg, Sweden, the police had arrested Nils Pedersen Fogelgren, still carrying about 1,600 Spanish dollars on his person, and were on the trail of Johann Johansen.⁷

The ringleader of the mutiny, John Sturmer, was still at large, but Saabye traced him to a Danish vessel that landed Sturmer at Rugenwalde.

An investigation proved that Sturmer was traveling under the name of Captain William Hackett and was headed for Danzig. Letters were sent to the Prussian authorities, who waited for Sturmer to arrive. On 1 September, Sturmer arrived in Danzig and was immediately taken into custody.⁸

Four of the mutineers still remained unaccounted for: Daniel Went, Arnaud Lemolgat, *alias* John Rainey, Edward Samuel and Frederick Frank. By early February 1817, Mr. Saabye was able to report that Went and Lemolgat had been seen at Bordeaux. A letter was sent by Saabye to a Mr. Barnett, the American Consul in Paris, to have the two mutineers arrested. Lemolgat was apprehended, but Daniel Went appears to have escaped.⁹

On 25 August 1817, a letter from John M. Forbes, Consul General in Copenhagen, to Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, stated that Mr. Saabye had died and that he, John Forbes, was now directly handling matters in Denmark. Before his death, Saabye had managed to collect a fair amount of the money and goods taken from the *Plattsburg*. This was now being held on account for Isaac McKim less the amount retained by the police to cover the expenses of detention.¹⁰

Nine of the twelve mutineers could now be accounted for. Samuel, Onion, Williams, Raag, White and Frank were in jail in Copenhagen while Nils Pedersen Fogelgren was in custody in Gothenburg; Arnaud Lemolgat, in Vannes, France; and John Sturmer in Danzig, Prussia. Daniel Went and Johann Johansen appear to have avoided arrest. Strangely enough the name of Edward Sauberson disappeared from the list of the incarcerated. Sauberson, one of the first mutineers captured, had been the first to confess.

It would seem that the most difficult task of the United States consuls, that of capturing the mutineers, was now completed. This was not to be the case. The United States had no extradition treaties with European nations in the early nineteenth century. Securing custody of the alleged felons would prove difficult, especially those in custody in France and Prussia. In addition, the United States consuls could not easily persuade American merchant captains to transport the felons back to the United States. In February of 1817, shortly before his death, H. R. Saabye had unsuccessfully tried to ship John Williams and Jens

Pedersen Raag back to the United States from Copenhagen. The Danish authorities turned over the mutineers to U.S. custody. Saabye immediately approached Seth Swain, captain of the only American vessel then in Copenhagen, the *Lady Gallatin*, of New York. Captain Swain refused to ship John Williams and Jens Pedersen Raag even when confronted by Saabye with letters from Secretary of State John Quincy Adams requiring that American vessels transport the mutineers. Saabye refused to issue Captain Swain's clearance papers, so Swain changed his destination from the United States to Lisbon. Captain Swain suggested that an armed naval vessel be sent to transport the mutineers. Following Saabye's death, the mutineers remained in Copenhagen for some time to come.¹¹

Meanwhile, in Stockholm, Sweden, Christopher Hughes, Jr., Chargé d'Affaires of the United States, had been negotiating with the Count d'Engestrom, Minister of State and of Foreign Affairs, for the transfer of Nils Pedersen Fogelgren to the United States authorities in order for him to be shipped back to the United States for trial. The negotiations were complicated by the fact that although Fogelgren had confessed to his part in the mutiny and murder, he was a Swedish citizen. Hughes informed Secretary of State Adams in May of 1817 of his negotiations. In this same note, he displayed amazement that the prisoners in both Denmark and Sweden expressed no remorse for their actions and entertained no fears of a trial in America, since no punishment worse than imprisonment was ever inflicted in the United States.¹²

It was not until August that Mr. Hughes was able to inform Secretary Adams that the King of Sweden had given orders that Fogelgren should be turned over to American representatives in Gothenburg.¹³ The American consul there was C. A. Murray and his problems began with an August directive from Christopher Hughes explaining the procedures for transporting Nils Pedersen Fogelgren back to the United States. Murray attempted to find an American vessel sailing directly from Gothenburg to Baltimore, Maryland. If this was not possible, then Norfolk, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston were the next choices in order of succession. Plans called for Fogelgren to be tried for mutiny and murder in *Plattsburg's* home port of Baltimore. Hughes also informed Murray that

the usual cost of sending a sailor home was ten Spanish dollars. In the case of Fogelgren, however, the cost of irons for securing the prisoner would be an additional expense.

Hughes expressed the opinion that American captains would not demand a greater amount for transporting the mutineer, since the captains should feel the great public importance in returning the criminal to face justice.¹⁴ Unfortunately for Mr. Murray, Hughes had totally misjudged American captains. It appears that Murray initially had difficulty finding a captain willing to transport Fogelgren. Finally, Murray was able to prevail upon Captain Ezra Allen of the brig *Joseph* to convey Fogelgren to Boston. Allen, however, was not impressed by appeals to his civic responsibility; he demanded of Murray twenty-five Spanish dollars in advance to transport the mutineer. The usual procedure was for payment upon delivery of the prisoner to a United States marshal at the first American port-of-call. By 30 August, final arrangements were made for Allen to transport Fogelgren to Boston. In a letter to Christopher Hughes, Jr., Murray indicated he paid the twenty-five Spanish dollars out of his own pocket and hoped the government would see fit to repay him the full amount, but he would be satisfied with whatever repayment he might receive.¹⁵ On 4 September Christopher Hughes, Jr., wrote to Secretary of State John Quincy Adams that Fogelgren was on his way to Boston and requested that the Secretary consider full repayment to Murray.¹⁶ Finally on 13 November, Secretary Adams informed Mr. Hughes that Fogelgren had arrived in Boston.¹⁷

While Hughes and Murray were shipping Nils Pedersen Fogelgren back to Boston, Mr. Albert Gallatin, United States Minister Plenipotentiary, was in Paris negotiating with the Duke de Richelieu for the extradition of Jean Arnaud Lemolgat, *alias* John Rainey, to the United States. Lemolgat had been arrested in Vannes, France, and Gallatin had been instructed to have Lemolgat delivered to the American consul at Nantes.¹⁸ Initially, on 5 February 1817, the Duke de Richelieu informed Gallatin that Lemolgat had been interrogated at Vannes and that there appeared to be no doubt

concerning his participation in the mutiny and that there should be no problem in conveying Lemolgat to the consul at Nantes.¹⁹

By 7 April, however, problems arose concerning the extradition process. It appears that when the Duke de Richelieu conferred with the Keeper of the Seals, this official pointed out that no convention existed between France and the United States for the surrender of malefactors. Lemolgat could not be placed in the hands of American authorities unless the government of the United States would reciprocate under similar circumstances. In addition to the objections of the Keeper of the Seals, the French Minister of Justice informed the Duke de Richelieu that under any circumstances, it would be necessary for the United States to prove with authentic documents that Lemolgat was a member of *Plattsburg's* crew when the schooner departed Baltimore.²⁰ In his reply of 23 April, Minister Gallatin acknowledged that since no convention existed, the United States had no right to request the surrender of Lemolgat and that he, Gallatin, could not promise that the United States would deliver to French courts a seaman charged with a similar offense. Even though no convention existed, Gallatin expressed the opinion that justice did not forbid such a surrender.²¹

Between 23 April and 25 July, the Duc de Richelieu continued to present the request that Lemolgat should be turned over to American authorities. Richelieu finally reported to Gallatin that the Minister of Justice had decided that due to the seriousness of the crime Lemolgat would be surrendered only if he were implicated at the trial of the other mutineers, and if the United States supplied documents proving Lemolgat was a member of *Plattsburg's* crew.²² On 11 November, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams wrote to Daniel Sheldon in Paris concerning Richelieu's conditions, pointing out that proof of Lemolgat's guilt in the mutiny could not be a condition of his surrender since proof of his guilt could not precede his trial. Secretary Adams conceded that the United States could not demand Lemolgat's surrender and agreed that if enough evidence appeared to exist in France to convict him, then the United States was willing to let Lemolgat be tried in French courts. Adams felt that the *Plattsburg* crime was so

horrible that the mutineers should not escape punishment, thus setting an example for future mutineers, and therefore, should be tried either in the country of their capture or in the country under whose flag they had sailed.²³

Adams' letter to Sheldon was forwarded to Albert Gallatin in early January 1818, and thence to the Duc de Richelieu. On 16 April, Richelieu finally informed Minister Gallatin that the Keeper of the Seals had decided Jean Lemolgat of Morbihan, Brittany, could not be tried in the French courts under the Code of Criminal Procedure for his conduct outside the kingdom. Furthermore, Lemolgat could not be surrendered to the United States unless the United States could furnish France with documentation of Lemolgat's guilt.²⁴ With this letter from Richelieu, all negotiations concerning Jean Lemolgat ended and he appears to have successfully "gotten away with murder."

While the Lemolgat affair was drawing to its unsuccessful conclusion, John M. Forbes, the United States Consul General in Copenhagen, still had six of the mutineers — Edward Samuel, Stephen Onion, John Williams, Jens Pedersen Raag, Nathaniel White and Frederick Frank — awaiting transportation to Boston. To further complicate matters, John Forbes reported on 25 August 1817 to Secretary Adams that the ringleader of the mutineers, John Sturmer, was in custody in Danzig, Prussia, and the Prussians had refused to hand him over to American authorities. Forbes indicated that he would try to open negotiations with the Prussians, and would also need a naval vessel to transport his six prisoners to Boston since such a desperate group was beyond the security conditions found on most merchantmen.²⁵

Secretary Adams was able to inform Forbes in January, 1818, that a naval vessel would be despatched to Copenhagen; weather conditions prevented departure until March or April.²⁶ Finally, in mid-March, the sloop of war *Hornet*, under the command of George C. Read, sailed for Copenhagen.²⁷ *Hornet* did not reach her destination until the first week of August, 1818. While he waited in Copenhagen, Forbes made contact with Count Dohna, Minister Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Prussia. Count Dohna forwarded Forbes' request

for the transfer of Sturmer to the Prussian Minister of Foreign Affairs, who replied that Prussian law required that Sturmer confess to his own guilt before he could be surrendered. Sturmer somehow managed to prove to Prussian authorities that he was a citizen of Danzig. Prussian authorities did admit that, when arrested, Sturmer had in his possession the personal effects of both the *Plattsburg's* captain and supercargo. Forbes continued to press Dohna for the surrender of Sturmer, and when Dohna balked at further discussion with his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Forbes wrote directly to the Prussian Department of State. The thrust of the Forbes letter was that both Sweden and Denmark, and also Great Britain in a recent unrelated case, had delivered mutineers who were their subjects to the country under whose flag the mutiny had taken place. Forbes then suggested that Sturmer be brought to Copenhagen to be identified by the six confessed mutineers.²⁸

Forbes received a reply to his letter from the King of Prussia through Count Dohna. On 26 June 1818, the King held firm to the point that Prussian law did not permit its citizens to be turned over to a foreign power for trial. However, if a Prussian citizen was accused of having committed a crime in a foreign country, then Prussian authorities would examine and punish the criminal action as if it had been committed in Prussia. The Prussian government was agreeable to sending Sturmer to Copenhagen to be identified by the mutineers jailed there. Three conditions, however, were imposed by the Prussians. First, Sturmer had to be returned to Danzig at the completion of the confrontation. Second, complete records of the Copenhagen confrontation would be communicated to the Prussian government. Finally, the expenses for transporting Sturmer to and from Danzig would be covered by the United States government. The Prussians also added that the money and property of Sturmer, which had been seized at the time of his arrest, would be used by Prussia to pay the costs of Sturmer's confinement in Danzig.²⁹

Consul General Forbes replied to Count Dohna on 30 July that Captain Read and the *Hornet* were expected any day in Copenhagen, and that he would prevail upon Read to remain in port until the proposed confrontation should take place.³⁰ Three days later, the *Hornet* finally arrived at

Copenhagen. Captain Read informed John Forbes that his orders from the Navy Department would permit him only a three-week stay and that the confrontation must take place within that time frame.³¹ As the weeks dragged by, a constant stream of letters between Forbes and Dohna seemed to do nothing to speed the arrival of Sturmer in Copenhagen. On 3 September 1818, Read indicated he could wait no longer and prepared to sail from Copenhagen with his six prisoners. Adverse winds held the *Hornet* in port, where word arrived that Sturmer had been delivered to Elsinore. The confrontation could finally take place as Captain Read agreed to delay his departure. At this point, however, Forbes was informed that the Danish and Prussian representatives claimed they had not been authorized to conduct the confrontation aboard a foreign ship. The alternative was to land the six mutineers for a gathering in the Hall of Magistrates at Elsinore.

The confrontation was conducted in the presence of Forbes, Captain Read, the Danish police-master at Elsinore, and Prussian Counselor of Justice, M. de Buchholtz. The Danish police-master interrogated twelve or fifteen sailors in their usual dress with several spectators, and placed John Sturmer, freed of his irons, among this group. Each of the six mutineers was then brought in singly and asked to indicate if he recognized anyone. Without hesitation, each of the *Plattsburg* mutineers singled out Sturmer. As a group, the mutineers then charged Sturmer with planning the mutiny and murder, stating that Sturmer had told them he had planned such a mutiny ahead of time and had waited only for a vessel carrying a large quantity of money. But Sturmer knew that under Prussian law he could not be publicly executed without a confession. The identification by the six mutineers and the evidence provided by the personal effects of the murdered captain, mate, and supercargo would have led to Sturmer's conviction before almost any jury in the United States.

Sturmer mocked the proceedings by demanding to be sent to Baltimore for trial, knowing full well this was not permitted under Prussian law. Both the Danish and Prussian officials tried in vain to convince Sturmer to confess his crime to "save his

soul." Forbes made a last futile attempt to have Sturmer delivered into the jurisdiction of the United States. Forbes and Read embarked their prisoners, and on Saturday, 5 September 1818, they sailed for Boston.³² It had taken over two years to bring the *Plattsburg* affair to this point. Seven of the mutineers were tried in Boston, and Sturmer was given a life sentence in Prussia. Only three of the original twelve mutineers were unaccounted for. Johann Johannsen disappeared in Sweden. Daniel Went was reported to have been seen, but not arrested, in Bordeaux. Edward Sauberson was arrested and confessed, and disappeared from the records following his incarceration in Copenhagen.

The Baltimore clipper schooner *Plattsburg*, aboard which the mutiny and murder occurred, was returned to Baltimore and her owner Isaac McKim on 1 September 1817. McKim surrendered her papers and sold the schooner almost immediately.³³

The seven mutineers in Boston had been indicted before the United States Circuit Court for the District of Massachusetts. Although indicted in October, the trials were put over until the December 1818 term of the court. Initially, John Williams, Jens Pedersen Raag, Frederick Frank, Nils Pedersen Fogelgren and Nathaniel White were indicted on three separate counts each for the murders of Captain William Hackett, First Mate Frederic Englehard Yeizer, and supercargo Thomas Baynard. The trial lasted from 14 to 29 December. All of the mutineers pleaded not guilty. At the conclusion of the trial, Williams, Raag, Frank, and Fogelgren were found guilty of the murder of Thomas Baynard. The other two counts of murder were dropped by the prosecution following the imposition of the death sentence. Nathaniel White was found innocent of murder but judged guilty of receiving stolen goods from the other mutineers. He was sentenced to two years in jail and given a fine of one dollar.

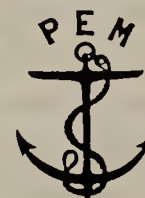
The four condemned mutineers, with President James Monroe's approval, were hanged in Boston on 18 February 1819. Their bodies were consigned to two Boston surgeons for dissection and study.³⁴

The case of the *Plattsburg* mutineers was not yet over. The following May, another complaint was placed against Nathaniel White and the two remaining mutineers, Stephen Onion and Edward

Samuel. Unfortunately, the official indictment and other documents have been lost.³⁵

The case of the *Plattsburg* fell into obscurity for twenty-one years following the death of the four mutineers. In 1840, John Quincy Adams, the U.S. Secretary of State during the *Plattsburg* affair, was in the midst of preparing a case before the Supreme Court. He represented more than thirty African slaves charged with murder and piracy aboard the Spanish slaver *Amistad*. The slaves rebelled, killed many of the slavers, and sailed the ship to Long Island Sound, where they surrendered after a fight, and placed themselves at the mercy of the court. Adams requested the *Plattsburg* correspondence in his search for precedents which might be applied in the *Amistad* case.³⁶

Although they seem to have had little or no impact on the *Amistad* case, the *Plattsburg* papers do serve as an example of a problem in the international law of the sea that has existed into this century, the principle of concurrent criminal jurisdiction. The preponderance of opinion favors the rule that crimes committed aboard merchant vessels on the high seas come under the jurisdiction of the courts where the vessel was flagged. This jurisdiction is not exclusive, however, and a state whose citizen is accused of a crime aboard a foreign vessel has the right to try the citizen when the citizen is within the jurisdiction of his own country.³⁷ In the case of the *Plattsburg* mutineers, the countries involved chose to interpret concurrent jurisdiction both ways. The Scandinavian states returned their citizens to the United States, while France and Prussia chose to prosecute with their citizens under their own laws.



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Pilots and Pilotage in North Carolina to the Civil War

ALAN D. WATSON

Briefly settled by Walter Raleigh's expeditions in the 1580s and permanently colonized by Virginians in the late 1650s, North Carolina became a chartered English province in 1663. From the first settlements in the Albemarle, habitation spread to the Pamlico area by the end of the seventeenth century, and took root in the Neuse, Trent and Bogue Sound regions early in the eighteenth century. Farther to the south, an abortive European intrusion into the Cape Fear region in the 1660s was followed by permanent occupation in the 1720s. With more than 300 miles of Atlantic coastline, an extensive system of inland waterways, and an abundance of natural resources, the early North Carolinians soon developed an oceangoing commerce based on naval stores, wood products, agricultural goods, and foodstuffs.¹

Despite the seeming bounty of nature, the geography of coastal North Carolina actually militated against a thriving oceanic trade. Between Virginia and South Carolina, three great capes — Hatteras, Lookout, and Fear — jutted into the Atlantic to threaten shipping. From the Virginia border to Cape Lookout, a chain of barrier islands, the Banks or Outer Banks, guarded the coast. Only one major river, the Cape Fear, emptied directly into the Atlantic, and at that juncture Frying Pan Shoals and Middle Ground, a sandbank lying in the mouth of the river, had to be judiciously considered. Thus, mariners approached the North Carolina coast with great caution.

The Outer Banks offered the most immediate obstacle to early maritime shipping in the colony. The islands varied in width from a quarter mile to three miles. Separating the islands and the mainland were several sounds, ranging from Currituck

and Albemarle to Pamlico and Core. The largest and deepest embayment was Pamlico, which attained a maximum width of twenty-six miles and an average depth of twelve and a half feet. Traversing the sounds to reach such ports on the mainland as Bath and Edenton entailed journeys of sixty-five and one hundred sixty miles respectively.²

Punctuating the barrier islands were numerous inlets that offered access to the sounds and the mainland. While inlets between the Virginia line and Cape Lookout opened and closed over the years, as many as twenty-five remained open long enough to acquire names and appear on maps. The most important for commercial purposes before the Civil War were Old and New Currituck inlets, Roanoke Inlet, Ocracoke Inlet, Beaufort Inlet, Oregon Inlet, and Hatteras Inlet.³

Because North Carolina was settled first by Virginians, who extended their southern frontier into the Albemarle region, Currituck and Roanoke inlets assumed the most immediate importance. Old Currituck Inlet, closed by 1731, was replaced by New Currituck, which opened about five miles to the south in the wake of a storm in 1713. However, New Currituck was so shallow that it admitted only light-draft ships, and shoaling finally closed the inlet in 1828.⁴

Roanoke Inlet, at the eastern end of the Albemarle Sound, was ideally located for the trade of the northeastern corner of North Carolina. Yet the shallowness of that inlet restricted its use to vessels of small burden. Moreover, Roanoke Inlet also continued to fill, and eventually closed between 1795 and 1819, probably in 1811. Subsequent efforts to cut a new inlet through the banks in the vicinity of Roanoke Island failed. However, shipping traffic to the Albemarle region had long

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since utilized Ocracoke Inlet in preference to Roanoke Inlet.⁵

Once settlement along the North Carolina coast pushed southward to the Pamlico and Neuse-Trent regions, Ocracoke Inlet became the principal entry point for shipping above Cape Lookout until the mid-nineteenth century. According to Governor George Burrington in 1731, shipmasters preferred to use Ocracoke Inlet rather than Roanoke Inlet. Almost a century later, in 1817, North Carolina legislator Archibald D. Murphey claimed that all the trade of Pamlico Sound and a great part of Albemarle Sound trade passed through Ocracoke Inlet.⁶

After the closing of New Currituck and Roanoke Inlets, Ocracoke remained the only feasible inlet for North Carolina shipping above Cape Lookout until 1846, when a storm opened Oregon and Hatteras inlets. While lack of depth and tortuous channels confined the shipping of Oregon Inlet to small fishing craft, Hatteras Inlet eventually proved sufficiently deep to accommodate larger oceangoing vessels. Shipping first utilized Hatteras Inlet in early 1847, after which its traffic superseded that at Ocracoke, until the end of the nineteenth century.⁷

Piercing the Outer Banks below Cape Lookout were Beaufort, Bogue, Bear, and New River inlets. Beaufort Inlet, also known as Topsail, Old Topsail, and Core Inlet, was the deepest of the inlets and opened into a large protected harbor. Still, shipping made comparatively little use of Beaufort Inlet because it offered access to a limited hinterland. The Newport and North rivers which emptied into Beaufort Harbor were shallow and short, thus denying a convenient connection to the interior. Along the southeastern coast of North Carolina below Beaufort Inlet, additional coastal islands militated against significant maritime trade, though Bogue, Bear, and New River inlets opened Bogue Sound to Atlantic commerce.⁸

Ultimately, the Cape Fear River, located in the southeastern corner of the colony, provided a water corridor deep into the interior of the province. The Cape Fear drained a large portion of North Carolina by means of its two branches, the Northwest and Northeast rivers. A second entrance to the river appeared in 1761, when a storm cut

New Inlet, leading from the ocean to the Cape Fear River about ten miles above the cape. The restricted depth of New Inlet limited its accessibility to relatively small vessels; larger craft necessarily continued to use the mouth or main bar of the Cape Fear.⁹

North Carolina shipping through the inlets and to the Cape Fear River first centered on plantation landings along the sounds, rivers, and streams in the interior, but small port towns appeared eventually to serve as conduits of trade. Bath Town, the first incorporated entity, materialized in 1705/6, almost fifty years after the permanent settlement of North Carolina. During the next decade and a half, additional ports sprouted along the interior coast — New Bern, Beaufort, and Edenton.¹⁰

Small towns later emerged on the Outer Banks to facilitate North Carolina shipping. Although Ocracoke Inlet offered the best entry into North Carolina above Beaufort, a shoal area called the Swash (Swatch, Swath) at the junction of the inlet and Pamlico Sound stymied larger vessels. Those craft found safe anchor in the harbor adjoining Core Banks, but in many instances necessarily lightered or offloaded cargo to smaller vessels in order to proceed. The necessity for wharves, warehouses, and other facilities on Core Banks produced legislation in 1753 to incorporate the town of Portsmouth. Numbering 246 residents in 1800, Portsmouth became the most significant of the villages on the Outer Banks in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century.¹¹

Later, other settlements arose in the vicinity of Ocracoke Inlet. Opposite Portsmouth on the north side of the inlet appeared Pilot Town, later the village of Ocracoke. And, in 1789, Portsmouth resident John Wallace and merchant John Gray Blount secured title to an island inside Ocracoke Inlet in order to establish a mercantile center called Shell Castle. The Wallace-Blount shipping and trading center flourished as North Carolina commerce revived after the Revolution.¹²

At that time, Ocracoke Inlet became an avenue of commerce for several newer ports that arose on the mainland of North Carolina. Washington, located on the banks of the Pamlico River and

chartered in 1782, eventually replaced Bath Town as the shipping center in the Pamlico area. In the Albemarle region, Camden and Plymouth became ports of entry in the nineteenth century, and such small towns as Elizabeth City also served as centers of maritime trade.¹³

In the Lower Cape Fear, Brunswick Town and Wilmington arose along the banks of the Cape Fear River to service the needs of the southeastern region of the colony. The appearance of Brunswick Town in 1726 coincided with the permanent settlement of the southern region of the colony. Wilmington emerged under that name in 1739/40 after several years' existence as a village along the Cape Fear. Located about thirty miles from the sea at the confluence of the Northwest and Northeast Rivers, Wilmington drew upon the trade of an extensive interior. At the onset of the American Revolution, Wilmington had become North Carolina's principal deep-water port, and in the process had overshadowed Brunswick Town.¹⁴

During the colonial era, many of the early towns became the focus of customs districts established by British authorities for the purpose of regulating colonial trade and enforcing commercial laws called Navigation Acts. By the time North Carolina became a royal province, following its purchase by George II in 1729 and the appearance of royal governor George Burrington in 1731, the British had divided the colony into five shipping districts: Port

Currituck; Port Roanoke (including Edenton); Port Bath; Port Beaufort (including New Bern); Port Brunswick (including Wilmington). After the formation of the United States, port districts included Wilmington (formerly Brunswick), New Bern, Ocracoke, Washington (formerly Bath), Edenton (formerly Roanoke), Camden, Plymouth, and Swansborough (briefly). By far, the most significant was Wilmington, which accounted for



The eighteenth-century Blount Pitcher depicts the Wallace-Blount mercantile center with a warehouse facility for lighters at Shell Castle Island. Photo courtesy of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.

80 percent of North Carolina's exports in 1815.¹⁵

The pilots who directed ships through Atlantic inlets, across sounds, over the Cape Fear bar, and up the Cape Fear River to Wilmington were indispensable to North Carolina's ocean commerce. These men were recognized formally by the colonial government only in 1715, when the General Assembly of the province attempted to promote maritime trade by legislation to appoint and maintain pilots at Roanoke and Ocracoke inlets. That legislation inaugurated a pilotage system that serves North Carolina to the present.¹⁶

The statute in 1715 required the governor to designate pilots for the Roanoke and Ocracoke inlets, which at that time offered access to most of the inhabited region of North Carolina. Not only were the pilots directed to maintain a suitable boat, keep two assistants, and use their "best endeavours to look for & repair on board" all vessels bound into their inlets; but the pilot at Roanoke had to stake and mark the channel past Croatan Shoals, and the pilot at Ocracoke had to provide directions to incoming vessels for reaching their desired river destinations on the mainland. If negligent, the pilots assumed responsibility for damages and losses sustained by vessels under their charge.¹⁷

The legislature offered compensation that was intended to entice and retain competent pilots. In addition to enjoying a monopoly over the traffic at their respective inlets, the pilots received thirty shillings sterling for each vessel drawing six feet of water or less, and ten shillings per foot more for each additional foot of draft. Moreover, the law required the governor to appoint "able & experienced Commissioners" to determine whether the pilots were qualified. Upon certification by the commissioners and after one year's experience, the pilots might receive an additional £30, money derived from poll taxes collected in the respective counties in which the pilots resided.¹⁸

Following the repeal of the pilotage legislation in 1723, the General Assembly reinstituted the system in 1738/39, but with significant changes. Rather than rely upon fees to compensate the pilots, the legislature appointed commissioners for ports Roanoke and Bath, for the town of New

Bern, and for Old Topsail Inlet. The commissioners were instructed to hire pilots for Ocracoke Inlet, subject to the approval of the governor, and provide the men with two boats appropriate for pilotage. After offering a surety bond for proper performance, the pilots would escort vessels across the bar at Ocracoke, guide them to ports on the mainland, maintain buoys and beacons marking the channels to Ocracoke Inlet, and report any alteration of the channels to the commissioners. The same instructions obtained for Old Topsail Inlet, which admitted ships to Beaufort, but without mention of pilot boats.¹⁹

Repeal of the pilotage statute in 1748 forced the General Assembly to address the issue again in 1752, when the legislature declared that poorly marked inlets and the "Insufficiency and Neglect of Pilots" militated against shipping. Combining features of the previous statutes, the legislature appointed commissioners for the port districts of Roanoke, Bath, and Beaufort, and required the commissioners to stake shipping channels and to license pilots for Ocracoke on behalf of the governor. The law prescribed pilotage fees, which were based on the draft of vessels, for directing ships through the inlets and for taking ships to and from Edenton, Bath, and New Bern. An amendment in 1755 pointedly commanded pilots to answer the call of ships seeking assistance in crossing the bar at Ocracoke, for formerly the men might respond at their discretion.²⁰

The General Assembly next considered pilotage for Ocracoke Inlet in detail in 1766. Port commissioners in the name of the governor continued to license pilots, who in turn were required to provide a surety bond to the commissioners. The legislature raised pilotage fees by sixty-seven to one hundred percent. Pilots, on the other hand, were subjected to a stiff penalty if they failed to respond to vessels signaling for aid.²¹

A quarter century after the settlement of the Cape Fear region, the colonial legislature established formal pilotage for the Cape Fear River, a reflection of the increased volume of shipping to Brunswick Town and Wilmington. A statute in 1751, modeled after that for Roanoke and Ocracoke, appointed commissioners of navigation to license pilots on behalf of the governor and to



Steam ferry and other vessels in a busy New Bern harbor circa 1860. North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.

supervise their conduct. It also required pilots to offer bonds for proper performance. The draft of the vessels and the distances sailed upriver determined pilotage fees. In addition to their charges for carrying ships over the bar, pilots received one-third of that amount for taking ships as far as Great Island in the Cape Fear River and another third for navigating the Cape Fear from Great Island to Wilmington. Quickly discovering that the fees were too low, the legislature in 1752 raised pilotage compensation by as much as fifty percent.²²

By 1764, a substantial augmentation in the trade to the Cape Fear prompted the General Assembly to refine further pilotage in the region. In order to provide appropriate supervision as well as sufficient work for the pilots, the legislature limited the number of pilots for the river to

twelve, though no more than eight could attend the bar and take vessels to and from Brunswick Town. An additional four might direct ships back and forth from Brunswick Town to Wilmington. The legislature again elevated fees, but within two years found the compensation “inadequate to the expence of Boats and Hands proper to be employed in so material a Service,” and raised the charges once more in 1766.²³

The advent of the American Revolution and independence left the state of North Carolina without a legal basis for its pilotage, thus occasioning legislation in 1777 that reinstituted the system on essentially the same terms that had obtained before the war. The General Assembly named commissioners of navigation and pilotage

for New Bern, Bath Town, and Edenton, who controlled pilotage from their respective towns to Ocracoke as well as pilotage for Ocracoke Inlet. The legislation also designated commissioners for the Cape Fear. The commissioners for Ocracoke and the Cape Fear appointed pilots for their respective areas, who in turn presented surety bonds to guard against their negligence or malfeasance.²⁴

During the Revolution and early national era, the General Assembly confined its interest in Ocracoke Inlet to appointing commissioners, and to establishing rates for pilotage across the bar and to the inland ports of New Bern, Edenton, and Washington. In 1819, the General Assembly decided that the commissioners of navigation and pilotage for inland ports served by Ocracoke Inlet lacked the expertise necessary to make proper pilotage appointments, and erected a Board of Branch Pilots to license pilots. Originally consisting of three men from Ocracoke and three from Portsmouth, the personnel soon included residents of Hatteras Island. The General Assembly vested the Board of Branch Pilots with the authority to certify pilots before they could receive appointments by the commissioners of navigation and pilotage for New Bern, Edenton, and Washington, and to recommend the revocation of pilots' licenses for intoxication or malfeasance. The statute required pilots to renew their licenses every three years with appropriate bond and securities.²⁵

Eventually, the Board of Branch Pilots assumed greater authority. Constituted by law as the Board of Commissioners for the port of Ocracoke in 1836, the self-perpetuating board was authorized to examine and license pilots for Ocracoke Bar and for Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds. The Board of Commissioners met triannually in an office at Ocracoke, where they formally recorded their proceedings in a journal and safeguarded the surety bonds of the pilots. Although the Commissioners of Navigation at Edenton, New Bern, and Washington apparently exercised concurrent jurisdiction in appointing pilots for the sounds to and from their respective ports, later legislation restricted pilot licensees to men living on Ocracoke Island or the vicinity of Portsmouth.²⁶

Pilotage for Hatteras Inlet materialized after the opening of the inlet in 1846. Because the area was located in Hyde County, the General Assembly directed the Hyde County court to appoint commissioners of navigation and pilotage for Hatteras. The commissioners in turn exercised control over pilotage at the inlet, though after 1857 could only grant pilot licenses to men living in Hatteras precinct, which extended from the Cape Hatteras Light House to Hatteras Inlet.²⁷

Beaufort, or Old Topsail Inlet, below Cape Lookout continued to attract shipping after independence. The General Assembly appointed commissioners of navigation and pilotage for Port Beaufort in 1784. Subsequently, the legislature prepared to grant virtual autonomy to the commissioners, making them self-perpetuating and entrusting them with "full power and authority" to regulate pilotage. Although the General Assembly reverted to its former policy of appointment of personnel and determination of fees, it later relinquished the power to designate the commissioners to the county court of Carteret County in which Beaufort was located, and then permitted residents of Beaufort to elect the commissioners.²⁸

Below Beaufort Inlet, increased shipping through Bogue and New River inlets impelled the legislature to institute formal pilotage for that area. A statute in 1784 appointed commissioners of pilotage and navigation for Bogue Inlet. Three years later, in 1787, the General Assembly erected Port Swansborough, which encompassed Bogue and New River inlets, and vested the commissioners of the port with the same authority as their counterparts elsewhere to license pilots. Shipping at Bear Inlet briefly merited commissioners to regulate pilotage, but within a few years the legislature not only ignored Bear Inlet and New River Inlet, but dropped references to Port Swansborough. Attention centered singularly on Bogue Inlet. Periodically, the legislature filled vacancies in the Bogue Inlet commission and raised fees, but later allowed the Onslow County court to appoint pilotage commissioners for Bogue Inlet.²⁹

After the Revolution, most attention focused on the Lower Cape Fear, where the district of Port Wilmington replaced Port Brunswick,



Mouzon Map of 1775 showing the North Carolina coast. Photo courtesy of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.



The Port of Wilmington, North Carolina, circa 1860. North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.

recognizing the virtual disappearance of Brunswick Town and the ascendancy of Wilmington as the premier port of the area. In 1784, the General Assembly limited the number of pilots to ten — five between the bar, including New Inlet, and Brunswick (later Fort Johnston) and five to take ships to and from Brunswick and Wilmington. Three years later, the number was increased to twelve and redistributed — four for the bar, two for New Inlet (who might also double as bar pilots), and six for the river traffic between Fort Johnston and Wilmington. During the 1790s, after continuing to wrestle with the question of appointing pilots for the Cape Fear Bar and New Inlet respectively, or allowing all pilots to attend both entrances to the river, the legislature chose the latter alternative. The numbers increased over the years, along with heightened traffic on the Cape Fear, until nineteen pilots served the river on the eve of the Civil War.³⁰ The General Assembly also relinquished control over pilotage affairs in the Cape Fear to local supervision. After 1800, the legislature reposed full authority to govern pilotage in a self-perpetuating Board of Commissioners

of Navigation and Pilotage for the Cape Fear. Statutes authorized the commissioners to establish rules and regulations for the arrangement and station of the pilots, and to fix rates of pilotage “as to them . . . seem[ed] most advisable and advantageous for the navigation of [the] . . . river.” To enforce the strictures, the commissioners were allowed to impose fines and penalties. Moreover, the commissioners were granted full power to resolve all disputes between pilots or between pilots and masters of vessels, subject to appeal to the New Hanover County court.³¹

The commissioners of navigation and pilotage for the Cape Fear River controlled pilotage throughout the antebellum era in compliance with statutory mandates from the legislature. Eventually the General Assembly entrusted the New Hanover County court annually to select a five-man board, but in 1847 politicized the commission by making its members subject to popular election. The impact of politics, particularly the heated contests between Democrats and Whigs (or Know-Nothings) in the 1850s, on pilotage, including the appointment of pilots, is moot.³²

Pilotage regulations changed little, however. Eventually, an applicant for a pilotage license had to present affidavits from at least three “nautical men” attesting to his ability to direct vessels and to his knowledge of the river and bars. Legislation in 1859 directed the commissioners of navigation to issue pilotage licenses in three categories, each determined by the age or experience of the applicant and the draft of ships to be piloted. In addition, apprentices were restricted to directing vessels drawing no more than six feet of water. Also, any disputes between pilots and masters of vessels might be decided by any commissioner of navigation or any justice of the peace of New Hanover or Brunswick county.³³

North Carolina pilotage contrasted with that of neighboring colonies and states — Virginia and South Carolina. A dearth of ports or trade centers helped to explain a tardy development of pilotage in Virginia. Although Virginia instituted pilotage for the James River in 1661, thereafter the colony apparently did not address the subject seriously until 1755, and even then not in the detail found in the laws of North Carolina. Only during the post-revolutionary era did Virginia establish a commission to license pilots, determine fee schedules by legislation, require sufficient pilot boats, and restrict partnership arrangements.³⁴

Pilotage in South Carolina more resembled the fragmented system of North Carolina, given the many inlets along the coast. As early as 1685, the South Carolina legislature inaugurated pilotage to facilitate shipping to the Ashley River. Later statutes appointed pilots for the Cooper River, followed by provisions for Georgetown, Beaufort, and Stono Inlet. By the third decade of the eighteenth century, the South Carolina system foreshadowed facets of pilotage in North Carolina, including a fee schedule based on the draft of ships, the proscription of collusion among pilots, the mandate of decked pilot boats, and the use of commissioners at the ports to appoint pilots.³⁵

Although the General Assembly established a system of pilotage for North Carolina, finding and retaining adequate personnel proved difficult. Following the passage of the statute of 1715, Governor Charles Eden appointed one George Thompson as the pilot for Roanoke Inlet, but the records do not indicate the designation of a pilot

for Ocracoke Inlet. In 1731, Governor George Burrington noted that the 1715 legislation had been virtually ignored. Thus, he proceeded to name pilots for both inlets. Apparently, the commissioners of navigation and pilotage for the Cape Fear began designating pilots immediately after the passage of the law in 1751, for the following year the pilots demanded that the legislature increase their fees.³⁶

Pilots aroused ambivalent feelings among the populace. The men often neglected to respond to ships seeking to cross the bars at Ocracoke and the Cape Fear, failed to take vessels up and down the Cape Fear River, and in the Cape Fear sought to reduce competition with their fellows by pooling their efforts. That collaboration proved “to be extremely injurious to commerce,” and the legislature banned partnership arrangements in 1771. However, the admonition had little effect, for by the mid-1780s it was “customary with the pilots of the Cape Fear to be equally concerned in the pilotage of vessels” coming to the river. Again the legislature prohibited partnerships, an injunction slightly relaxed in 1787 to permit no more than two of the Cape Fear bar pilots to work together.³⁷

To protect their interests, pilots not only engaged in collusion but also railed against unauthorized competition. John Bragg and seven other Ocracoke pilots in 1773 petitioned the governor to stop blacks, slave and free, from offering their services as pilots to take ships from the bar to Edenton, Bath Town, and New Bern. The pilots contended that the practice constituted unfair competition as well as contributed to “Great Confusion and Irregularity” in the waterborne commerce of the region. Nonetheless, blacks continued to direct ships, not only in the northern sounds but also in the Cape Fear.³⁸

Indeed, a paucity of pilots prompted the legislature in 1783 to permit commissioners of navigation and pilotage of the various ports to license slaves as pilots, provided masters posted bond for them. The practice was disallowed legally in 1812. However, legislation permitted slaves to work as pilots on the rivers provided they were supervised by whites. Inevitably, the

bondsmen, whose skills as watermen were well known, and whose labor was indispensable, directed vessels under little or no restriction. Among them was Peter, who worked along the Cape Fear River and secretly helped runaway slaves secure their freedom through the maritime portion of the underground railroad.³⁹

Pilots were a rough-and-ready lot, much like their fellow merchant seaman, and reacted to the long periods of lassitude in their lives with a proclivity to uproarious behavior. A reported "riot" in 1810 between pilots in Smithville, which had replaced Brunswick Town as a river port, and some European sailors resulted in the imprisonment of the more unruly combatants. Many years later, a street fight in Smithville between two pilots and a Fort Johnston soldier was settled amicably. And pilots at times turned on their own. George Bower was tarred and feathered in 1842 by fellow pilots when he took charge of a vessel under a new fee schedule that reduced charges "against the will of the pilot majority."⁴⁰

Contentious as pilots were, the public recognized that the men were essential to the maritime trade of the colony and state. And theirs was not an enviable position, as they often eked out a living by fishing and grazing livestock while waiting for ships. It was a lonely existence on a coast ravaged by storms; a gale in 1775 caused the deaths of two Ocracoke pilots. Moreover, pilots had legitimate complaints: ships came over the bars without seeking pilotage and left the colony without paying pilotage fees.⁴¹

War, an all too common occurrence in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, particularly threatened pilots, who assumed a military as well as commercial importance during such conflicts. During King George's War, when three Spanish sloops appeared off the Cape Fear Bar in September 1748, pilots unwittingly went to their aid, only to be taken prisoner and forced to lead the enemy into the river from which the Spanish attacked and briefly occupied Brunswick Town. More cautious in the subsequent French and Indian War, Cape Fear pilots on occasion waited for ships to cross the bar into the river in order to ascertain their identity before offering

assistance.⁴²

The Revolution elevated further the importance of pilots. In a "Sea . . . infested with Privateers Pilots [were] exposed to the hazard of being trepanned and carried off by Enem[y] Ships holding out false Signals," according to the General Assembly. Ocracoke pilots feared for their safety, but Cape Fear pilots proved more liable to deception and capture. In January 1776, after the British had taken a pilot, the Wilmington-New Hanover Safety Committee assumed control of the local pilots, determining who would serve and the location of their stations, and providing when necessary support for their families.⁴³

The War of 1812 again found the British threatening pilots by flying the American flag in order to entice the men to the enemy ships. On two forays to Ocracoke in 1813, the British lured four and three pilots respectively to their vessels, only to release all but two who previously had jumped overboard and swam ashore. The following year, the British seized two pilots at Beaufort and three off the Main Bar of the Cape Fear River. Pilots, like North Carolinians generally, rued the defenseless nature of their coast, but the state never received assistance from the national government.⁴⁴

Although war and the threat of capture by the enemy understandably created consternation among pilots, the loyalty of the men remained unquestioned. At the onset of the Revolution, pilots at Ocracoke captured three British vessels, including a small cruiser, together with 1,000 pounds of gunpowder and sixteen men. Forty years later, in a meeting to protest the *Chesapeake* Affair, residents of Wilmington and vicinity adopted a resolution to request the Commission of Navigation and Pilotage to recommend to the pilots that they refrain from extending "their professional aid" to British warships and privateers. No doubt the men responded favorably. At the outbreak of the War of 1812, pilots of the Cape Fear offered their services to defend the area against the British as a company of sea fencibles.⁴⁵

In addition to the dangers of their profession, pilots also labored under manifold regulations

designed to protect the public and improve pilotage service. Beginning in 1751, Cape Fear pilots were required to notify port authorities of communicable diseases such as smallpox on board vessels under their control so that the ships might be quarantined. By the time of the Revolution, that mandate had been extended to pilots at all ports. A further service of Cape Fear pilots was to inform officials of ships that dumped ballast overboard into the channel of the river, a practice strictly prohibited by law. During the nineteenth century, pilots at all ports were warned to report the illegal dumping of ballast as well as the destruction of beacons and channel markers.⁴⁶

The General Assembly's efforts to improve pilotage service resulted in the imposition of additional burdens upon the men. Before the Revolution, legislation urged Ocracoke and Beaufort pilots to use decked boats rather than open craft, allowing them to charge higher fees for such services, and required Cape Fear pilots to provide similar vessels. Decked pilot boats, larger and more protected, offered pilots a better opportunity to reach ships in rough, heavy seas. After the Revolution, decked pilot boats remained mandatory in the Cape Fear, both at New Inlet and at the main bar. Moreover, by 1790, Cape Fear pilots had to train at least one, but no more than two, apprentices and keep a telescope on their boats at all times.⁴⁷

The legislature in the 1790s pursued its efforts to encourage pilots to resort to decked craft as pilot boats. First, the legislature raised pilotage fees for those who owned and utilized decked boats. Next, recognizing the additional expense of such vessels, the legislature allowed as many as three (later five) pilots to enter into a partnership to purchase the boats. Eventually, the General Assembly entrusted the determination of the need for decked boats to the commissioners of navigation and pilotage.⁴⁸

In order to secure competent, conscientious pilots, the General Assembly throughout the eighteenth century raised pilotage fees. The legislature also guaranteed compensation for those pilots who boarded ships beyond the bars, even if the masters did not desire assistance, and provided

additional payment for pilots for loss of time when ships they boarded were blown out to sea in rough weather. In the instance of the Cape Fear in 1766, legislation reduced the amount of the pilots' surety bonds when the sum was "found inconvenient for many Pilots to procure."⁴⁹

The American Revolution particularly accentuated the need for greater compensation in light of the devastating inflation as well as the added dangers occasioned by the war. At Ocracoke, pilots refused to work and unauthorized individuals began to direct ships at the inlet, too often to the loss or destruction of the vessels. The General Assembly in 1778 forbade unlicensed pilots to take a foreign craft over the bar on penalty of six months imprisonment without bail, and raised pilotage fees as inducement to the pilots to return to work. Cape Fear pilots also declined to seek licenses, claiming that fees were too low. Some reportedly left the area to work in other states.⁵⁰

The colony not only tried to appeal to pilots by increasing their fees but, in 1738/39, the General Assembly authorized the port commissioners to build a house on Ocracoke Island for use by the pilots. Over the years that privilege lapsed. In 1766, the pilots on Ocracoke reminded the legislature that in the past, land had been offered to them for maintaining houses and, they claimed, for keeping pilot boats. Thus, the General Assembly ordered the commissioners of the ports of Roanoke, Bath, and Beaufort to acquire by eminent domain twenty acres of land on Ocracoke Island, appropriately situated for the pilots, to be paid for by fees collected by the commissioners in the respective ports. The commissioners might then lease lots from the twenty-acre tract to each Ocracoke pilot desiring land.⁵¹

Following the Revolution, the state offered Cape Fear pilots homesteading privileges on the land adjacent to Fort Johnston, located on the Cape Fear River at Smithville (present Southport). Declaring that it was necessary for the pilots to live close to the mouth of the river and that Fort Johnston was the most convenient location in the area, the legislature allowed all bar pilots an acre of land on which to build homes for themselves and their families. In the event of the death of a

pilot, his family was entitled to continue to use the property for seven years. From the cluster of pilots at Fort Johnston emerged Smithville, incorporated in 1792 and renamed Southport a century later. The town served as the seat of Brunswick County for more than 150 years.⁵²

The appearance and development of the pilotage system in North Carolina in the eighteenth century evidenced a government effort to regulate a needed private enterprise for the benefit of the public. Government — provincial, county, and municipal — before the Revolution reflected the mercantilist penchant for intervening, often minutely, in the economy for the welfare of the whole. After the mid-eighteenth century, few occupations were regulated more closely than that of pilotage, though the efficacy of such close oversight was debatable.

The manner in which the colony and state addressed pilotage in North Carolina resembled other facets of regulated activity such as tavernkeeping. In the instance of pilotage, while the population of the colony was small and shipping was limited, the General Assembly early tried to centralize control of the system under the auspices of the governor (who appointed pilots) and the legislature (which prescribed pilotage fees). However, the system became unwieldy toward the end of the eighteenth century. The General Assembly greatly decentralized pilotage supervision, allowing the commissioners of navigation, or the Board of Pilots in the case of Ocracoke Inlet, virtually plenary powers over pilotage affairs. Indeed, the legislature eventually entrusted the appointment of the commissioners to local county courts or to local elections in the

case of the Cape Fear.

Pilotage regulations also revealed changing shipping patterns in the colony and state of North Carolina. Although the earliest legislation encompassed Roanoke and Ocracoke Inlets, attention soon focused on Ocracoke, the center of shipping before the emergence and growth of the Cape Fear region. However, important as Ocracoke remained for the Albemarle-Pamlico sound region, Beaufort and Bogue Inlets, particularly the latter after the Revolution, began to evidence increasing trade. The concern shown for pilotage in the Cape Fear, however, clearly revealed that Port Brunswick, subsequently Port Wilmington, came to dominate North Carolina shipping.

Last, that hardy breed of men, the pilots, command attention. Though in a sense public servants, the pilots were ever individualistic, self-protective, aware of commercial dependence upon their services, and demanding of greater remuneration. Yet, as sentinels on the coast, braving nature, sometimes competing fiercely with their fellows, and threatened during the course of war, pilots endured a rugged existence. Theirs was an admirable profession undertaken by little-remembered men.



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Notes

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- The author wishes to thank Robert J. Cain of the Division of Archives and History for the reference to and a copy of the 1738/39 law.
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 36. Saunders, *Colonial Records*, 3: 184, 210, 638. Of course pilots operated on an informal basis in the Cape Fear before 1751. See Lawrence Lee, *The History of Brunswick County*, (Charlotte, NC: The Heritage Press, 1980), 47.
 37. Clark, *State Records*, 23: 667, 682, 858; 24: 502, 851; Minutes of the Board of Commissioners, 1 May 1858-12 March 1860.
 38. Saunders, *Colonial Records*, 9: 803-804; Josiah Bradley to John Gray Blount, 30 November 1810; Alice Barnwell Keith, William H. Masterson, and David T. Morgan, ed., *The John Gray Blount Papers*, 4 vols. (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, Department of Cultural Resources, 1952-1982), 4: 136.
 39. Clark, *State Records*, 24: 503; *Laws, 1800*, chap. 25; 1812, chap. 17; Rev. W. H. Robinson, *From Log Cabin to the Pulpit; or, Fifteen Years in Slavery*, 3rd ed. (Eau Claire, WI: James H. Tifft, 1913), 11, 13. The persistence of slaves escaping from North Carolina by water and the many instances of slave watermen helping other slaves depart the state surreptitiously evoked legislation that prohibited slaves from piloting ships over the bars or through the inlets and banned slaves from traveling on vessels without written permission. David S. Cecelski, "The Shores of Freedom: The Maritime Underground Railroad in North Carolina, 1800-1861," *North Carolina Historical Review*, 71 (April 1994): 201.
 40. Bill Reaves, *Southport (Smithville): A Chronology, Vol. I 1520-1887* (Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1978), 15, 29, 39.
 41. *The North-Carolina Gazette* (New Bern), 24 March 1775; Clark, *State Records*, 24: 591; Angley, "History of Ocracoke Inlet," 41.
 42. Adelaide L. Fries et al., ed. *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, 11 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1922-1969), 1: 259; Lee, *History of Brunswick County*, 47-48.
 43. Clark, *State Records*, 24: 218; Leora H. McEachern and Isabel M. Williams (ed.), *Wilmington-New Hanover Safety Committee Minutes, 1774-1776* (Wilmington, NC: Bi-Centennial Association, 1974), 70, 72; Angley, "History of Ocracoke Inlet," 18-20.
 44. Sarah McCulloh Lemmon, *Frustrated Patriots*.

North Carolina and the War of 1812 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971), 129-131, (hereafter Lemmon, *Frustrated Patriots*).

45. William N. Still, Jr., *North Carolina's Revolutionary War Navy* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, Department of Cultural Resources, 1976), 12; Angley, "History of Ocracoke Inlet," 18; *Wilmington Gazette*, 14 July 1807; Lemmon, *Frustrated Patriots*, 42, 124.
46. Clark, *State Records*, 23: 357, 826-827, 859; 24: 126, 505-506; *Revised Statutes, 1836-7*, chap. 88; *Laws, 1846-1847*, chap. 60; *Revised Code, 1854*, chap. 85.
47. Clark, *State Records*, 23: 826, 859; 24: 72; *Revised Statutes, 1836-7*, chap. 88; *Revised Code, 1854*, chap. 85.
48. *Laws, 1795*, chap. 21; 1796, chap. 31.
49. Clark, *State Records*, 23: 438, 668-669, 826-827; 24:, 503.
50. Clark, *State Records*, 23: 171, 495; 24: 167, 218.
51. Clark, *State Records*, 23: 670, 746; "An Act for facilitating the Navigation of the several Ports of this Province."
52. Clark, *State Records*, 24: 507-508, 589; Lee, *History of Brunswick County*, 90-93; Joshua Potts, "The Location of Smithville," *Letters and Documents, Relating to the Early History of the Lower Cape Fear*, with Introduction and Notes by Kemp P. Battle, L. L. D., James Sprunt Historical Monograph No. 4 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1904), 86-89.



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News

CONFERENCE ON RACE AND ETHNICITY

Mystic Seaport in Mystic Connecticut will host a conference entitled "Race, Ethnicity, and Power in Maritime America: The Role of Race and Ethnicity in Maritime Communities of North America and the Caribbean - A Multidisciplinary Discussion" from September 14 through 17, 1995. The conference will draw together people engaged in maritime studies and related fields such as American history and literature, urban studies, Native American studies, African-American Studies, Latin American studies, diplomatic history, sociology, art history, labor history, archaeology, and anthropology. The conference is currently being organized to include keynote lectures, short papers, and round table discussions. For more information, contact the Seaport at (203) 572-0711.

NAVAL HISTORY

The History Department of the United States Naval Academy will sponsor the Twelfth Naval History Symposium in Annapolis, Maryland, from October 25 through 27, 1995. There is no central theme for this symposium but, as with last year, it will include subjects on any aspect of naval history, from ancient times to the present, and include North American, European, Asian and South American naval subjects. To help celebrate the 150th anniversary of the U.S. Naval Academy this year, special attention will be given to the subject of naval education and training. For more information, contact Dr. William B. Cogar, Department of History, United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland 21402-5044.

NETHERLANDS MARITIME CONFERENCE

The Second International Congress of Maritime History will be held in Amsterdam and Rotterdam from June 5 through 8, 1996. The congress theme will be "Evolution and Revolution in the Maritime World in the 19th and 20th Centuries," with a focus on changes in the maritime world, either through dramatic new develop-

ments or through the continuation of established long-term trends. The congress will include sessions on nautical science and cartography; the construction equipment, and propulsion of ships; and the management of shipping companies, navies, and ports. For more information, contact Mrs. drs. Corrie Reinders Folmer, PO Box 102, 2350 AC Leiderdorp, The Netherlands.

UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGY

The 1996 Society for Historical Archaeology Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology will be held at the Omni Netherland Plaza, Cincinnati, Ohio, from January 2 through 7. The themes will be "Bridging Distances: Recent Approaches to Immigration, Migration, and Ethnic Identity," as well as "Forging Partnerships in Outreach and Education." Contact Marcy Gray, Conference Chair, Gray and Pape, Inc., 1318 Main Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45210 for more information.

USS *CONSTITUTION* MODEL COMPETITION

The USS Constitution Museum in Boston announces "'Old Ironsides' and the U.S. Navy: 200 Years in Scale Models" (1797-1997), a competition and exhibition celebrating the 200th anniversary of the launch of the famous frigate. The competition is open to individual, professional, or amateur modelers, and entries can include any completed model of an American naval vessel that was/is in service during *Constitution's* 200-year career. Judging divisions will include scratch-built, semi-scratch built, and kit categories, with separate sections for dioramas, cut-aways, half-hulls, and ships in bottles. Deadline for submission of entry forms is May 1, 1997. Call the museum at (617) 426-1812 for a registration packet.

JACOBSEN SHOW TO TRAVEL

"Antonio Jacobsen's Painted Ships on Painted Oceans," an exhibition of America's most prolific marine painter, will travel to Philadelphia's new

Independence Seaport Museum from December 1995 through March 1996, and then travel to the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History in the Summer of 1996. The show opened at the Mariners Museum in Newport News, Virginia.

SEAFARING WOMEN EXHIBIT

The Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Museum opened an exhibition highlighting the lives of 19th-century Long Island women who went to sea with their captain husbands. The exhibit, entitled "The Sailing Circle: 19th Century Seafaring Women From New York," is open through June 20, 1996.

RUSSIAN NAVAL HISTORY

The State Marine Technical University, St. Petersburg, is organizing a conference entitled "The 300th Anniversary of the Creation of the Russian Fleet by Peter the Great" to be held the end of May or June, 1996. Subjects may include Peter the Great and his epoch (history, art, science and technology, history of shipbuilding); applied

and experimental ship hydrodynamics; international cooperation in marine education; and prospects of ship operations, marine safety, and fleet renovations. The leading Russian shipyards and shipping companies are expected to take part. For more information, contact Professor D. M. Rostovsev, The State Marine Technical University, Lotsmanskaya str., 3, St. Petersburg 190008, Russia.

EASTERN REGIONAL SHIPS-IN-BOTTLE CONFERENCE

The Maryland Chapter of the Ships-in-Bottles Association of America (SIBAA) will be holding an Eastern Regional conference on September 8, 9 and 10 at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michael's, Maryland. Members will be showing their latest works and demonstrating their newest techniques and tools for putting ships in bottles. Anyone interested in learning the art is welcome. For further information, please write: The Maryland Chapter of the SIBAA, Rick Hegge, President, 22040 Holiday Drive, Smithsburg, MD 21783.

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Book Reviews

TOMOHEI CHIDA AND PETER N. DAVIES, *The Japanese Shipping and Shipbuilding Industries: A History of their Modern Growth* (London and Atlantic Highlands, NJ: The Athlone Press, 1990). xi + 240 pages. ISBN 0-485-11271-x. \$65.00.

Serendipity has played a great part (if not the major part) in Japan's post-war economic success, including that of its shipping and shipbuilding industries. Certainly, the British shipping line headquartered on Leadenhall Street in the City of London that I worked for during the mid-1960s was as well-managed and efficiently run as any of its Japanese counterparts. The Japanese have little to offer by way of management techniques, unless good luck is one of them, which should or can be usefully applied to Western shipping lines. Professor Chida and Dr. Davies have produced a book which does tend to tout Japanese achievements and to stress the particular skills of top Japanese management, and to pay little attention to the price paid by labor and society. The nether side of post-war Japanese industrial expansion and economic miracle does require more investigation from academics. Nonetheless, *The Japanese Shipping and Shipbuilding Industries* makes fascinating and interesting reading. Indeed, this well-written survey packed with information and helpful tables suffers mainly from the fact that it is perhaps too short and condensed. Undoubtedly, this is not so much the fault of the two authors as it is the result of space limitations imposed upon them by the publisher.

After a brief introduction, the first two chapters of 42 pages combined cover the evolution and growth of modern shipping and shipbuilding industries (1890-1919) and the shipping and shipbuilding industries in the inter-war period. The main portion of text, some 140 pages, are devoted to the four chapters which investigate the successes and problems of the post-war twin industries.

Although the authors in the introduction make it plain that it is the aim of their study to trace the

development of shipping and shipbuilding industries in Japan from the end of the Second World War to the present time, it would have been useful to have more information on the pre-war period. What is evident from the first two chapters, however, is that a close relationship between government and industry had characterized Japanese shipping and shipbuilding from its modern start. Furthermore, there was an intimate connection between Japan's victorious wars against China, Russia, and Germany, respectively, and the emergence of these industries. The First World War, particularly, was seen as important, for the authors argue that it "may be said to have marked the completion of the industries' take-off stage, for when hostilities came to an end, Japanese shipping was operating services throughout the world and its shipbuilders were firmly established as constructors of large-scale, technically efficient, steamships. It could be fairly stated that by 1918, the industrial structure had assumed the form which would be mainly inherited after the Second World War in 1945" (p. 14). One of the important and perhaps surprising points that the authors do make is that while only a relatively few Japanese merchant ships survived the Pacific War unscathed, four-fifths of Japan's shipbuilding facilities were not damaged by the strategic bombing of the Japanese main islands. Coupled with undamaged yards, the twin industries inherited from the pre-war period managerial and technical know-how, a skilled workforce, and goodwill.

Goodwill, especially on the part of the Allied occupation authorities, was crucial to the continuation of the shipping and shipbuilding industries during the years immediately after the end of the war. The policies of SCAP are investigated in Chapter Three, which looks at the aftermath of the Pacific War (1945-52). While some restrictions were imposed by the Allies on the two industries, the shipping and shipbuilding industries were not dismantled or sold off for reparations. Furthermore, their possible future performance was not harmed by the anti-monopoly policy directed against industrial conglomerates as part of the

United Nations plan for the demilitarization and democratization of Japan. The close ties between government bureaucracy, national policies, and shipbuilding subsidy programs, and the top management of the two industries remained intact. Added to this long-established relationship were also the strong links between the boffins at universities and the engineering and design teams on the shipyard floor. By 1951, virtually all restrictions had been lifted, and both industries were greatly benefiting, if only temporarily, from the demand caused by the Korean War.

Chapter Four analyzes the basis for expansion (1952-63). Much of the early expansion in shipbuilding came from strong demand from domestic shipping lines as they began once more to compete on worldwide routes. Government subsidies in the mid-1950s helped to reduce the price of Japanese steel, which had been one of the major factors for Japanese shipbuilders' earlier inability to compete with their overseas rivals. The Japanese were in a position to take advantage of "a profound structural change in the demand for shipping services and consequently for tonnage" precipitated by closure of the Suez Canal. The authors contend that "the innovations which were inspired by this event were so fundamental that they can be regarded as the greatest technological advance since the change to steam and steel" (p. 98). Chida and Davies do point out the important role that the Kure shipyard of National Bulk Carriers, an American shipping firm, played in giving free access to new technologies and to American shipbuilding techniques. Be that as it may, by the late 1950s Japanese shipbuilders had established themselves at the forefront of new technologies and designs in the building of large tankers and, later, bulk ore carriers and other specialized ships such as car carriers. From an industry that had previously relied very heavily on domestic orders, the post-Suez years saw a phenomenal growth in foreign orders.

The penultimate Chapter Five studies the boom in the 1960s (1964-73). Just as the Japanese were fortunate enough to take full advantage of the radical changes taking place in shipbuilding during the 1950s, Japanese shipping lines during the 1960s were able to take advantage of containerization from the beginning of its introduction on

Pacific routes. Furthermore, the burgeoning foreign exports created demands for Japanese shipping services as well as different types of ships as cargoes for exports became more diversified. For the shipbuilding industry, the 1960s were a period of continuous growth of output, expansion of facilities, and amalgamation of companies. The intense export-driven activity and prosperity of the shipbuilding industry was a potent force within the tremendous economic success of Japan during these years.

Both the Japanese shipping and shipbuilding industries struck rough seas following the oil shock of 1973. The problems of expansion and contraction after 1974 are dealt with in the final chapter. The vitality of top management, which was emphasized by the authors as a major factor in the ability of the two Japanese industries to create the conditions that allowed for the massive growth in the thirty-five years following the Treaty of San Francisco, is truly tested in bad times.

By 1990, no permanent solution had been found to the difficulties caused by the depression by the management of either the Japanese ship-operating or shipbuilding industries. Indeed, this excellent book describes the golden age of these twin industries which has now passed into history.

A. Hamish Ion

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LUC CUYVERS, *Sea Power: A Global Journey* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1993). 272 pages, illustrations, bibliography. ISBN 1-55750-145-9 (1-555750-146-7 paperback). \$38.95 (\$22.95).

This is a remarkable book: well-researched by author Cuyvers, who holds a doctorate in marine studies from the University of Delaware; written in the light, breezy style that one would expect from this free-lance producer of television documentaries; and gorgeously illustrated with 137 color photographs (some double the 9" x 12" pages), taken mostly by the Belgian-born author and supplemented with historical pictures. What

makes the work outstanding, however, is its comprehensive overview of all the major historical and contemporary aspects of humankind upon the sea: merchant shipping, exploration, passenger liners, navies, international law, oceanography, and seabed drilling and mining. It ably informs specialists in each of these areas about the others, educates the lay reader about all of them, and serves the role of supplementary textbook for college-level survey courses in oceanic, maritime, and/or naval history. As such, the book is required and enjoyable reading for all persons interested in the uses of the sea, past and present.

The title is somewhat awkward and misleading only because the term "sea power" belongs to Alfred Thayer Mahan, who is usually and narrowly associated with naval warfare. Indeed, Cuyvers pays Mahan a handsome tribute at the outset and generally develops his theme around Mahan's appreciation of the role of the sea. The author observes, however, that only the first four of the book's six chapters apply to subjects Mahan knew. To Cuyvers, the power of the sea in the life of the race is *much* broader than the naval aspect, and he took his own "global journey" aboard several vessels to gain first-hand knowledge from officers and crewmen alike. Each chapter is organized into historical discussions and the author's shipboard observations, both interwoven as chapter subdivisions by only somewhat contrived connections between them.

The chapters are titled rather than numbered. "The Great Highway" focuses on oil tankers and their history; the author rides one through the Suez Canal, juxtaposing the experience with voyages of equally precious cargoes in antiquity, from the Minoans to the Romans. "The Riches of the East" are viewed from the transpacific voyage of a containership (wonderfully replete with resident ghost!), plus the history of the early modern China and Indies trades by the Iberians, Dutch, and Americans. "Passage to Paradise" explains cruise ships, on one of which Cuyvers participates as a "fun" voyage to nowhere, and traces the former slave and coolie trades, oceanic immigration, and early liners. "Ruling the Waves" covers navies from Salamis to the world wars, the author's contemporary vantage point being the aircraft carrier *Ranger* off Somalia in 1993. A few

slips creep in: neither Carthage nor the Arabs ever controlled the entire Mediterranean; Great Britain dates from 1707; and Italy was never one of the Central Powers during World War I.

Sea Power: A Global Journey breaks new ground in the chapters "Mineral Wealth" and "A Depth of Knowledge," the one viewed from a Norwegian vessel supplying a North Sea oil platform, the other from a Japanese ocean research ship. The former chapter relates "how ocean law developed" (p. 169), with a sound account of Hugo Grotius; the history of whaling and oil drilling; and how the issue of seabed mining led to the post-World War II law of the sea conferences. The latter chapter includes the history of cartography and navigation, especially Henry the (so-called) Navigator, and deep-sea research pioneered by naturalist Edward Forbes, and nowadays heavily influenced by modern submarine technology.

This fine work is much better and more useful as history than the "Sea Power" television series for which it was written as the companion volume. For variety, though, Cuyvers traveled on different ships than those used for the book. The first TV segment, "Lifeblood," is highly recommended, as it shows underwater archaeologists at work on the Bronze Age *Ulu Burun* wreck, the replica Greek trireme underway, and both the economics and operations of modern oil tankers. Portions of all six TV segments would greatly enhance a college course whether or not the book is used. The bibliography would be extremely useful in such a class, but the absence of an index is unfortunate because of the text's lack of strict chronological sequences.

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JOHN B. HATTENDORF AND JAMES GOLDRICK, EDS., *Mahan Is Not Enough: The Proceedings of a Conference on the Works of Sir Julian Corbett and Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond* (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 1993). vi + 405 pages. ISBN 0-9637973-1. \$10.00.

In the fall of 1990, the United States Naval War College sponsored a conference on the life and works of Alfred Thayer Mahan, coinciding with the centenary of the publication of Mahan's *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783*. But Mahan was not enough. Two years later, a similar conference was held to evaluate the significance of two British naval and maritime historians, Sir Julian Stafford Corbett (1854-1922) and Admiral Sir Herbert William Richmond (1871-1946). Neither are household words to American audiences.

Corbett, a civilian, was a graduate of Marlborough public school and Trinity College, Cambridge, receiving a First Class degree in the Law *Tripos* in 1875. He never seriously practiced law, preferring a variety of more esoteric pursuits—sketching, traveling in India, the United States, and Italy, and writing fiction and popular biography. A novel and short biography of Sir Francis Drake, considered by critics as fit for boys and not much else, impelled him (as a means of gaining self-respect) to undertake serious archival research leading to his first major work, *Drake and the Tudor Navy* (1898). Four years later, he was appointed lecturer in history to the Royal Naval War College at Greenwich. This was followed by the publication of *England in the Mediterranean, 1603-1714* (1904), *England in the Seven Years' War* (1907), and *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* (1911). Corbett offered his services to the Admiralty upon the outbreak of the Great War (1914-18), and completed three volumes of *Naval Operations*, the official history of the war at sea, prior to his death.

Richmond, a career naval officer, entered the Royal Navy as a Cadet in 1885, and was promoted to midshipman in 1887. As a lieutenant, he qualified as a torpedo officer, became a commander in 1903, and subsequently served three years as executive officer on the flagship of the

Cape of Good Hope station (1904-1907). He had developed a strong interest in history, and was encouraged by Corbett to pursue archival research. He completed the draft of *The Navy in the War of 1739-48* by 1914. Promoted captain in 1908, he served as commander of HMS *Dreadnought* (1909-10). Like Corbett, Richmond lectured at the Royal Naval War College. In 1913, he became assistant director of the operations division of the war staff at the Admiralty, leaving in May 1915 to become, briefly, liaison officer to the Italian navy. With the support of Admiral Sir David Beatty, he commanded a battleship with the Grand Fleet in 1917-18. Promoted to rear-admiral in 1920, vice-admiral in 1925 (following a two-year stint as commander-in-chief of the East Indies station), and admiral in 1929, he retired in 1931. Two years later, Richmond was elected to the Vere Harmsworth chair of naval history at Cambridge, and became a master of Downing College in 1936. His major publications include *The Navy in India, 1763-83* (1931), *Sea Power in the Modern World* (1934), and *Statesmen and Sea Power* (1946).

The 1992 Newport Conference was designed in part to explore the role of civilian, military and naval historians. To what extent, furthermore, is an understanding of the past important to naval officers? Might it not be a valuable tool to perceive elements that persistently recur in situations involving the potential or actual use of force. Finally, do the works and careers of Corbett and Richmond — both pre-eminently strategists — have any relevance to the naval planners of today and tomorrow?

It should be noted that the conference papers are of uniformly high quality. Daniel Baugh, "Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond and the Objects of Sea Power" explained that in Richmond's view, the "objects of naval strategy consist of putting pressure on the enemy, whether by assault or investment [blockade], and reducing the enemy's capacity to relieve that pressure or to put pressure on oneself." Unlike Mahan, Richmond refused to say that bringing enemy forces to battle was *the* ultimate object of grand strategy, or even *an* ultimate object. Jon Tetsuro Sumida, "The Historian as Contemporary Analyst: Sir Julian Corbett and Admiral Sir John Fisher," explored Corbett's

involvement (1904-1910) in countering criticism of Fisher's desire to replace the battleship with the battle cruiser, concluding on the one hand that the influence of Corbett's analytical writing with respect to capital ship design seems to have been negligible. Yet his influence may well have come through his historical writing, *i.e.*, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, in which he attributed the basis of England's naval success to a synthesis of finance, technology tactics and strategy. "This suggests the following lesson for the present," Sumida concludes, "the most appropriate role of historians with respect to the making of naval policy is not to provide either answers to critics or solutions to problems, but rather to raise the standards of inquiry [and] broaden perspectives. . . ." (p. 11).

As Baugh sees contemporary utility in Richmond, so does Geoffrey Till in "Corbett and the 1990s." Accepting that some of the central preoccupations of planners today "raise no echoes at all in Corbett's work," he considers its value rests upon the fact that so much of what Corbett said remains both "sensible and relevant" — even more importantly, that everything he wrote was informed by a "spirit of reasonable moderation." David Alan Rosenberg utilizes the musings of Corbett and Richmond on the writing of (to them) contemporary naval history as a springboard to discuss the complexities of formulating modern naval strategy. All naval historians should read — and reread — Rosenberg's essay.

As valuable as the conference papers are, even more valuable is the interplay between the conference participants, a feature missing (due to technical difficulties) from the published Mahan conference proceedings. This alone makes this volume worth the price of admission. As an example, note Daniel Baugh's comment (p. 43): "Britain lost the First World War." And the rejoinder by David Zimmerman (p. 44) that "the allies would have lost the war in 1916, if not earlier, if it hadn't been for the substantial British commitment of forces to the Western Front." The debate on the virtues of a maritime versus a continental strategy continues.

It is difficult to find anything of substance to criticize. Perhaps the inclusion of brief biographical sketches of the major presenters would have been useful. Might not the *Dictionary of National*

Biography profiles of Corbett and Richmond, or ones comparable, also have been printed? Every naval historian is indebted to the conference's organizers and this volume's editors. The collection belongs in every library with any pretensions to a naval collection. No, [reading] Mahan is not enough.

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FREDERICK STONEHOUSE, *Wreck Ashore: The United States Life-Saving Service on the Great Lakes* (Duluth, MN: Lake Superior Port Cities Inc., 1994). ix + 213 pages. ISBN 0-942235-22-3. \$24.95.

Frederick Stonehouse has authored several popular books on maritime history, including *The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald*. This most recent effort, *Wreck Ashore*, covers a subject which has received little attention by Great Lakes historians in recent times. This large-sized paperback volume is a history of the activities of the United States Life-Saving Service, with a major emphasis on its organization and operations on the Great Lakes. It covers, in an exhaustive sense, the period of its existence as a separate government agency from the early 1870s to its incorporation into the U.S. Coast Guard in 1914. The author states at the outset that he has "tried to reach back through time to feel the pulse of the old life savers" (p. ix). Thus, he attempts to satisfy both those who might be considered Great Lakes buffs as well as serious students of history. At times this has proven to be a difficult task.

Stonehouse organizes a vast amount of material into four parts, entitled the "Early Life-Saving History," "Life Savers on the Great Lakes," "Tales of Rescue," and "The End of an Era," covering a total of twenty-nine chapters, with some as short as one page. Although the four chapters of Part I include some interesting historical background, they are not in keeping with the author's stated purpose "to chronicle the history of the United States Life-Saving Service on the Great Lakes" (p. viii).

Part II of *Wreck Ashore*, containing eight

chapters, is the heart of the book. Topics covered in laborious detail include the organization of the Life-Saving Service by chronicling the various personnel positions and civil service rules; the classes of stations constructed, including equipment made available over time; the locations of the stations on the Lakes; station operations; specific equipment developed and utilized during the period; and histories of some of the more interesting station keepers. The concluding chapter of the section consists of pages of tables of annual data pertinent to the Life-Saving Service. Let me focus on three of these chapters. In Chapter 9 on "Station Operations" the author includes everything from beach apparatus drills, boat drills and signal drills, maintenance of station equipment, the activities of station personnel during off duty hours to the "dealing with the bodies of the drowned" (p. 79). Chapter 10, on equipment, discusses the various craft and related equipment developed for use in the life-saving mission. Of special interest is the Frances life car which "traveled on a hawser" from the shore to the endangered vessel offshore and the Lyle gun which was used "to fire a line to a stranded vessel" (pp. 120-121). The chapter of tables contains data collected primarily from the *Annual Reports* of the U.S. Life-Saving Service for the 1877-1914 years. Although what was presented is useful, additional information could have provided a better perspective of the significance of the Service. For example, data on the total Great Lakes commerce in value and tonnage is available for some years. Federal appropriations and yearly expenditures are obtainable and would give the reader a better idea as to the costs of this government operation in comparison to the benefits received. There is always the question as to movement of vessel and cargo insurance rates over time. Is there any evidence that the Life-Saving Service made possible lower rates for Great Lakes shipping? On this question, the author has little to say.

The third part of *Wreck Ashore* has fifteen chapters, most very short, devoted to dramatic stories of what Stonehouse refers to as "a particular part of the life-savers' rescue operations," revealing how equipment was used under actual conditions (p. 156). Although of some interest to

the professional historian, these chapters would be most appealing to the Great Lakes buff. Many possible subjects are included and intend to show, according to the author, "the relentlessness of both the life-saving crews and nature" (p. 156). All of the chapters of this section were based on accounts drawn from the *Annual Reports* of the Life-Saving Service. Six of them were quoted verbatim, or nearly so, using the somewhat dated language of the time. All except one of these stories reveal the heroism of the life-savers working under extremely difficult circumstances. The final chapter, "The End of an Era," accurately summarizes the history of the Life-Saving Service. The Service had an excellent record despite having been operated on small budgets, but as Stonehouse observes "the fundamental characteristics of their mission changed" by 1914. The new and large steel vessels "stayed clear of coastal hazards. When they got into trouble it was far offshore, beyond the scope of the life-savers' operations" (p. 198). The end result was that the Life-Saving Service was merged into a new organization, the Coast Guard.

In short, Stonehouse will not entirely satisfy either academics or Great Lakes buffs with his accounts of the Life-Saving Service, but this work should revive interest in a fascinating subject. To the author's credit, he has undertaken an exhaustive amount of research. An excellent bibliography and footnoting throughout the text should meet the approval of all those interested in Great Lakes maritime history. Moreover, the volume is filled with photographs, illustrations and plans for buildings and vessels taken from the author's private collection as well as from the major archival collections of the Lakes.

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JOHN G. WELLS, *The Royal Navy: An Illustrated Social History, 1870-1982* (Stroud, Gloucestershire and Dover, New Hampshire: Alan Sutton in association with the Royal Naval Museum, Portsmouth, England, 1994). x + 306 pages, black and white illustrations, chronology, notes, bibliography, and index. ISBN 0-7509-0524-7. \$44.00.

Touted as a social history of the Royal Navy during the last century-and-a-quarter, this book contains anecdotal commentary on all aspects of life and incorporates numerous selections of recollections and eyewitness accounts at all levels in the Royal Navy. Black and white photographs and some drawings are ubiquitous, and there is an eleven-page chronology and fifteen pages of notes and bibliography, the latter containing about 250 entries. The chronology includes statistics of the annual manning level of the navy, for example: 60,000 in 1870, 450,000 in 1918, 99,500 in 1923, 865,000 in 1945, 195,000 in 1947, and 59,000 in 1993. Those figures alone speak volumes. Each of the fourteen chapters opens with a short catchphrase, for example, by Lords Palmerston and Fisher, Joseph Conrad, Rudyard Kipling, and Prince Philip, himself an admiral. Familiar figures and events are described: the Shelborne-Fisher Scheme for career development for officers, the Yexley-Fisher-Churchill nexus facilitating reforms on the lower deck, the vicissitudes of the Fleet Air Arm, the Geddes Axe, the "mass indiscipline" at Invergordon in 1931, the "Way Ahead" initiative of Admiral Lord Mountbatten, the unique role of the navy in Winston Churchill's funeral, the crisis over cancellation of the Attack Aircraft Carrier (CVA-01) when the full Navy Board threatened to resign, incorporation of nuclear powered submarines and the Polaris missile, and the abolition of the rum ration in 1970.

The author, Captain John Wells, is a veteran of thirty-five years in the Royal Navy, serving as commanding officer of warships and of the famous gunnery school *Excellent* on Whale Island. He retired in the mid-1960s. During the 1980s, he wrote histories of *Excellent* and HMS *Warrior* and was research historian for *Warrior*, one of the earliest battleships (built 1860), now fully restored. The *Warrior*, along with HMS *Victory* and

the Royal Naval Museum, are all important attractions located at Portsmouth, England. The latter institution sponsored the publication.

The primary strength of this work is the emphasis on the comprehensive naval community which includes the world of officers and seamen at sea and ashore. Wells has utilized most of the important published primary sources such as recollections of Lionel Yexley, Sam Noble, Stephen Reynolds, Sydney Knock, Nicholas Monsarrat, Lord Charles Beresford, and ashore, Dame Agnes Weston. There are long quotations interspersed within the narrative. He credits the Royal Naval Museum, the Library of the Ministry of Defence, and the extensive holdings of the City Library of Portsmouth. Yet, there is no indication that he is aware of the best archives for unpublished sources, the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, and the Public Record Office, Kew, both in greater London.

More scholarly, expansive, and older accounts of these matters are by Michael Lewis and Christopher Lloyd and, more recently, there are the studies by N. A. M. Rodger and Marcus Rediker for the eighteenth century, and Henry Baynham, Eugene Rasor, and Anthony Carew for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Wells could aspire to do for the twentieth century what Rodger did in *The Wooden World*, 1986, for the eighteenth. Like Rodger, Wells incorporates the quarterdeck of the officers and the lower deck of enlisted personnel along with life ashore and social aspects of naval administration. Beyond that, there is no comparison. Rodger is currently engaged preparing a massive new history of the Royal Navy. In Well's work, Rediker is ignored and Arthur Marder, the older historian of the Royal Navy during this same period, is not credited for his study most related to this book, *The Anatomy of British Sea Power* (1972). In two footnotes citing the sources for the Invergordon incident — Wells insists on calling it a mutiny — he fails to include the best, most authoritative source, Anthony Carew, *The Lower Deck of the Royal Navy* (1981) (p. 286).

Education, training, recruitment, victualling, punishment, mutiny, the rum ration, recreation, uniforms, and domestic life and arrangements are all covered, much of it in excessive detail. On occasion, operations and battle experiences are

reviewed, but haphazardly and inconsistently. There is some description of the Crimean War, accounts of a few isolated incidents during World Wars I and II such as the battles of Jutland, the River Plate, and Taranto, but several pages are devoted to the Falklands-Malvinas campaign, the "epic victory" of 1982. At the end, there is a nod to the role of women, and then a curious warning: "Even so the Navy must be careful that recognition of social trends and its duty as an equal opportunity employer does not impair its war-winning capability" (p. 267).

This is an idiosyncratic work. Wells focuses on topics and events with which he is personally familiar, for example, *Excellent*, HMS *Warrior*, naval education, training, victualling, recreation, and changes in the uniform, officer and enlisted personnel. He feels compelled to describe what activity occurs where, what changes have been made, and where everything is located, especially during the post-World War II period. The exaggerated coverage of the Falklands-Malvinas campaign applies here too.

In the foreword, Lord Lewin of Greenwich observes that *The Royal Navy* describes changes in the social structure of the navy during the last hundred years and is a major contribution to the maritime history of Great Britain. It actually falls short of both of those claims.

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PAUL KEMP, *Convoy Protection: The Defense of Seaborne Trade* (London: Arms and Armour Press, distributed in U.S. by Sterling, 1993). 128 pages, tables, 102 black and white illustrations, index, hardcover. ISBN 1-85409-03702. \$24.95.

For his subject, author Paul Kemp has produced a short but well-written book relating to the protection of merchant shipping through the use of convoy. For his theme, the author has selected the circumstance of the 1914-18 sea war in the Atlantic and the 1941-45 American submarine campaign against Japan in the Pacific.

To lead into the subject, Mr. Kemp takes us back to an earlier time of sea warfare. I was intrigued to read that the Royal Navy, between 1793 and 1797, conducted 132 escorted convoys, shepherding in all 5,827 merchant vessels. These convoys were so successful that only .06% of those convoyed were taken by enemy privateers. All this took place in the days of sail when keeping station must have been a real challenge to shipmasters.

Despite this past record of success, when the British embarked upon the war with the Central Powers in 1914, convoying as a defensive measure was at first totally ignored. It would not be until 1917 that the Royal Navy would adopt a system of convoy — and that barely in time to avert the shutdown of Britain's vital lines of supply. The way Kemp handles the telling of the Royal Navy's war against the German submarine during the First World War is a pleasure to read, while at the same time providing an excellent insight into an evolutionary process which finally turned the tables in favor of the Allies. In constructing his argument for the value of convoying during this period, Mr. Kemp has utilized well-recognized secondary sources which adds comprehensiveness to what he has to say.

The second half of Kemp's book begins with the story of the early months of the war with Japan, a period during which each side excelled in their mistakes. He explains the lack of Japanese planning in developing a system for protecting their vital links between the home islands and what would become the occupied East Indies. It was upon the East Indies that Japan would count for supplies of petroleum and much of the other vital material necessary in order to sustain a realistic war effort. On the other side of the mistake ledger, Kemp discusses the U.S. Navy's patched together responses toward countering the Japanese threat. At first, submarine missions on the part of the United States Navy were prioritized toward the targeting of the enemy's high seas fleet. There were also miscellaneous chores placed upon the submariner, such as the evacuation of gold from the Philippines, which distracted from what could have been effective missions against the enemy's line of supply. Until well into 1943, attacks of all kinds by United States submarines

were largely unproductive of kills. The major reason for that failure was that torpedoes either did not explode or else ran too deep, missing the target entirely. Japanese shipping was left practically undamaged for the first year-and-a-half of the war. In fact, as Kemp relates, during 1942, Japan actually increased its tonnage of tankers. Kemp articulately portrays these circumstances, the turn-around in U.S. naval fortunes following changes in strategic attack doctrine, and the point when submariners were finally equipped with efficient weaponry. Because of these new policies and changes, the American undersea fleet had, by 1945, virtually choked off shipping inbound to Japan, thus severely hampering the Empire's ability to wage effective warfare. Kemp takes the damage to Japan one step further in a closing statement in which he opens himself to controversy by provocatively writing, "The crux of the matter is that American submarines had strangled Japan's economy and in a sense rendered the dropping of the atomic bomb in 1945 unnecessary."

In discussing the 1941-45 war, I believe the author departed from his purpose with a disproportionate amount of verbiage on U.S. patrol actions and the U.S. Navy's command structure, while largely neglecting the specific reasons why Japan's convoy system failed. The skimpy bibliography and very limited set of footnotes suggest that he did not attempt to avail himself of the more than sufficient archival material dealing with the Japanese side of the conflict, or of much of the American analysis which was developed following the war. Taken together, this would have helped emphasize the reasons for the Japanese failure of their convoy systems.

I cannot help but wonder why the author did not choose to introduce the story of the submarine war in the Atlantic (1941-45), especially a telling of the convoy systems successfully used there by the Allies and which in large part caused the German defeat at sea. In the Atlantic, the world was witness to a scenario where both sides at the beginning were more or less equally endowed in their respective abilities to attack and defend. If Kemp had included the Atlantic war in his thesis, he would have projected a stronger case for convoying, and he would have given his book a

far better balance.

Nevertheless, *Convoy Protection* is well written, and, as this reviewer found out, provokes thought. As such, it is a worthy inclusion to the collections of those with an interest in sea warfare.

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DAVID DELISON HEBB, *Piracy and the English Government, 1616-1642* (Aldershot, Hants.: Scolar Press, 1994). ISBN 0-85967-949-7. £69.95

Historians interested in the development of government policy and early Stuart naval affairs will find David D. Hebb's *Piracy and the English Government 1616-1641* intriguing. On the other hand, general readers looking for more tales of British naval adventure on the high seas against the Barbary pirates will be disappointed. Although the two expeditions to Algiers in 1620 and Sallee in 1637 are discussed in considerable detail, they are not the major focus of the book. Instead, they serve as another window into the complex question of Stuart policy making.

This study, based on extensive and careful archival research, pursues two basic themes. First, the role of diplomacy and the structure of finance illuminate the reasons behind the adoption of particular government policies. Second, an analysis and assessment of the economic and social cost of piracy demonstrates that the English were not a "nation of pirates" but rather the victims. The losses, both monetary and human, amounting to more than 3,000 ships and 7,000 individuals captured by the Barbary pirates, created a serious political problem the first two Stuart rulers needed to solve. Charles I succeeded, only to have his efforts overwhelmed by the domestic political crisis of 1640.

An examination of diplomatic efforts and financial planning sets the stage for the success or failure of both naval expeditions. The same general conditions governed English diplomatic action in both cases. England acting alone did not have enough economic or naval power to protect her own commerce much less rid the Mediterra-

nean world of the menace created by the Barbary pirates. The Thirty Years War overshadowed all diplomatic efforts to secure the necessary cooperation of other Christian powers. The Low Countries and Spain pursued their own national interests, even though both countries suffered from the same disruption of their trade and commerce. While Hebb does not deny the reality of war, religious difference, and mercantile rivalry, he argues convincingly that there was more cooperation and understanding of the common problem than most traditional histories acknowledge. In both cases, England secured the cooperation of Spain, although the actions of Frederick the Elector of the Palatinate and religious difference made accommodation difficult. On the other hand, increased economic competition with the Low Countries overshadowed the common bond of Protestantism.

Careful diplomacy before the expeditions was a factor in their success or failure, but financial problems, created in part by structural inadequacies in English government, were more critical to the outcome. Finance, in the end, made the difference between the failure of the Algiers expedition and the success of the expedition to Salée less than twenty years later. Hebb's analysis of the structural problems of the government of James I, which he alleges created the financial problems plaguing the first expedition to Algiers, is less satisfactory than the diplomatic sections. He criticizes the king and council for failing to outline the tax collection process clearly, and for treating each dispute and question over the levy individually instead of issuing blanket orders to all towns. This criticism ignores the council's traditional and essential role as mediator between the sovereign and local officials, which dictated that they give each complaint individual attention. In this way, the council stayed in touch with local officials, and the councilors themselves were able to exercise their patronage. Further, although the council was the eyes, ears, and hands of the monarch, it was not the head. The king, after consultation and advice, had to give direction, and if he did not, then the councilar system did not operate efficiently. The real point, which Hebb only mentions in passing, is that the system of government, so effective under the Tudor rulers,

was now falling behind the economic and social changes of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Financial problems did hamper the first expedition against Algiers, and it accomplished little. Led by Sir Robert Mansell, the fleet barely engaged the enemy. The English ships were too large to prevent pirates from leaving the Algiers harbor, and the meeting with the Bashaw of Algiers to demand restitution for previous losses and the freedom of English captives resembled a farce. Mansell's contemporary, Sir William Monson, wrote the most damaging criticism of the expedition. His account of the misgovernment of the ships became the standard analysis until Sir Julian Corbett tried to vindicate Mansell in his naval history of 1904. Corbett, influenced by the naval race with Germany, distorted the real picture of the Algiers expedition by claiming Mansell was sent to harass the Spanish. Hebb corrects these misconceptions of naval history, and substitutes financial deficiencies as the primary reason for failure. Sufficient funds as well as the elimination of naval corruption would have gone a long way toward securing an English victory. Mansell's fleet had inadequate supplies, and replacements were delayed due to faulty financial planning and haphazard tax collection.

The most intriguing part of the financial discussion is the way Hebb relates the piracy problem to the developing crisis over government finance and, in particular, the revival of ship money. Prior to the expedition to Algiers, there was an attempt to ignore the old request for ships before allowing a port town to pay money instead, but that tactic came to nothing. While ship money was part of the crisis in 1628, Hebb argues that piracy in the 1630s created a true naval emergency for Charles I. Therefore, ship money could be collected and even extended to the countries legitimately. It was not an innovation at all. What might have been legal, however, is not the same as the political perception of illegality. The ship money crisis forced the government into a more satisfactory means of raising money for the expedition against Salée. A levy of one percent on tonnage and poundage, a tax collected at the port of exit and entry, disguised the levy on the inland consumer. This financial solution led to the

success of the Sallee expedition, but it was unfortunately overshadowed by the political damage caused by the ship money case.

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J. E. D. WILLIAMS, *From Sails to Satellites: The Origin and Development of Navigational Science*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). 310 pages, illustrations. ISBN 0-19-856387-6. \$35.00.

This ambitious book, written by a past president of the Royal Institute of Navigation and based largely on papers published in the *Journal of Navigation*, covers the history of navigation from the magnetic compass, lunar distances, and chronometers, to such twentieth century developments as radio direction finding and the gyrocompass. The author acknowledges up front that this book is not a product of "scholarly research," but rather of a life-long passion for the history of science in general, and of navigation in particular. While scholars might learn much from his clear explanations of complex navigational techniques, they might be put off by his presentist attitudes and reliance on questionable historical evidence.

As the subtitle indicates, this book presents navigation as a science. Science did contribute a great deal to the development of navigation. But, as the author rightly recognizes, it failed in some regards. The longitude problem, for instance, which had defeated generations of scientists, was solved by a "mechanick." Although the author does not define the term, we can assume that science is something like physics, which he sees as "an evolution not of things, but of strange new

ideas." This idea would not sit well with the natural philosophers of the seventeenth century, whose instruments and experiments are often seen as key features of the scientific revolution. Nor does it describe most contemporary scientists for whom making and understanding are inextricably intertwined.

Several important elements of the navigational story seem to be missing from this account. I will mention just two. Although the author suggests that the production of scientific instruments in general, and presumably navigational instruments in particular, contributed in important ways to the industrial revolution, he does not provide any examples. Indeed, he does not even mention the dividing engine — designed and constructed by Jesse Ramsden, rewarded with Longitude Prize Money in 1776, and used to produce the scales for octants and sextants — which was one of the most important machine tools of the period. Another missing element pertains to the liquid compass. Although the author mentions the two British patents of 1813 and 1906, he neglects to mention Edward S. Ritchie of Boston, who began producing successful liquid compasses during the Civil War and whose instruments soon became U.S. Navy standard.

Most historians today understand that we inevitably bring our own perspectives and prejudices to whatever investigation we undertake. And, while recognizing that total objectivity may be impossible, we try to understand earlier and other cultures on their own terms. The author of this book, however, pretends to be objective, with no awareness of the extent to which his ideas are conditioned by his own time and place. Moreover, he repeatedly evaluates historical actors in light of current understanding, with no recognition that ideas may be common today which were once rejected for perfectly good reasons. One final criticism pertains to the inclusion of matters of prurient interest that detract from the important and very interesting story the author wants to tell.

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RICHARD F. WELCH, *An Island's Trade: Nineteenth-Century Shipbuilding on Long Island* (Mystic, CT: Mystic Seaport Museum, 1993). xiv + 146 pages, illustrations, maps, tables, appendices, bibliography, chapter notes, index. ISBN 0-913372-67-6. Hardcover, \$20.00

There is a tendency, not always lamentable, for the authors of maritime histories to make the vessels the major characters in their books. However, in Richard F. Welch's *An Island's Trade*, the reader will not find the shipbuilders eclipsed by the stories of the ships they built.

Long Island (New York) shipbuilding had its start by 1694 and continued into the 1920s. A stable shipbuilding industry was not seen here until the late 1700s, and was dying out before World War I, so Dr. Welch's volume concentrates on the nineteenth century. As in many shipbuilding areas, Long Island yards got a new lease on life during World War I and disappeared permanently soon after. It was only during that last gasp that steel vessels were built in a Long Island shipyard.

Queens County and Kings County (Brooklyn) shipyards are mentioned only briefly. Welch describes Brooklyn as "geographically and economically part of the port of New York" (p. 3) and concentrates his efforts on Suffolk County ports (Nassau County being a later creation from Queens).

Within Suffolk County, the most productive of the shipbuilding centers were Port Jefferson, Northport, and Greenport. Although there were minor outbreaks of activity in such South Shore towns as Islip, shipbuilding on Long Island was predominantly a North Shore industry. Northport and Port Jefferson are on Long Island Sound, and Greenport is on the North Fork of Peconic Bay, cut deep into the island's eastern end. This work concentrates on these three communities to the practical exclusion of all others.

Welch is at his best in pointing out personal connections between shipbuilders. A good example of this is the family-tree-type chart he calls The Willse Connection (p. 3). John Willse established a shipyard at what is today Port Jefferson in 1797. Richard Mather, and probably his brother

Titus, apprenticed under Willse. Richard married Willse's daughter, Irena, and continued the family business. Their son, John R. Mather, and grandson John T. Mather, were also shipbuilders. William L. Jones, an apprentice of Titus, married Irena after Richard's death, and continued operating the shipyard. Nehemiah Hand, the major shipbuilder at Setauket, also once worked for Titus Mather. Elisha Bayles is believed to have learned his trades of rigging and caulking also at the Willse yard. He later went into shipbuilding and his sons James M. and C. Lloyd followed in his footsteps. The sons, later working in partnership, had as apprentices David and Jesse Carll, who established Northport's leading shipyard. James M. Bayles' son, James E., also became a prominent shipbuilder. This depiction of the relationships linking more than a dozen shipbuilders is a fascinating instance of the depth to which the author has delved into his subject.

This volume's strengths are in the descriptions of the shipbuilders and their business relationships. Considering that the manuscript records of these shipbuilders are either nonexistent or scanty, the author has done a remarkable job in reconstructing their stories. Rarely do historians of shipbuilding spend as much effort in fleshing out the men who owned the shipyards and directed the construction of the vessels.

Labor is not ignored either, as it so often is. Shipyard workers are analyzed in terms of wages and many other aspects of their personal and professional lives.

Welch discusses the importance of repair work to the shipyards, and demonstrates the financial significance of repairs in a table (#6-3, p. 119) comparing the dollar values of new work and repair work performed by various builders. He makes some errors in discussing the data of this table, however. The Bayles brothers each earned \$22,000 for new work, and \$3,000 for repairs; Jesse Carll earned \$22,000 for new work and \$12,000 for repairs. The author describes this situation by saying, "Repairs amounted to better than one-sixth of the income of the Bayles brothers and more than one-half of Jesse Carll's earnings." In fact, \$3,000 is less than one-eighth of the \$25,000 earned by each of the Bayles brothers, and \$12,000 is somewhat more than one-third of

the \$34,000 earned by Carll.

These errors gain significance in light of another mathematical lapse. Welch's figures estimating the percentage of shipworkers in the workforces of the various villages may also be called into question, (p. 66). For Port Jefferson in 1870, starting with a population of c. 2,000, he estimates that half were female and that a further 250 were not in the work forces because of age, infirmity, or wealth. For Northport in 1882, however, starting with a lower total population of 1,500, he assumed a higher number, 260 were not working because of age, infirmity, or wealth. The difference is not explained.

There are flaws here which seem to indicate a lack of maritime knowledge. The description of the process of building a vessel in Chapter Two is so over-simplified as to be inaccurate for some of the period and for some of the types of vessels in question. Of course, any reader would expect some simplification of this process which has been discussed at great length elsewhere. Still, it does not seem possible that a person who wrote "The techniques of construction were rudimentary and readily acquired through a few seasons' work . . ." (p. 83) has a real understanding of the complexities of wooden vessel construction.

The author supplies good maps for those not intimate with Long Island. What is left out is a list of vessels built, or any kind of analysis of the numbers and types of vessels built. Welch discusses the deficiencies of a list of Long Island vessels printed in 1885, but makes no attempt to correct it. He discusses the problems of relying on state and federal census records, but makes no mention of master carpenters' certificates and other customhouse records used to such good advantage by such maritime historians as William A. Baker and John Lyman. This reviewer came away with no clear sense of what kind of vessels were produced by the shipbuilders and shipwrights whose lives are detailed in this book. There is little information on the vessels, their sizes, quality, or uses. Without this sort of analysis, the Long Island shipbuilding industry cannot be accurately compared to the industry of other places.

This volume is physically attractive and well produced. With some reservations, readers inter-

ested in the lives of the shipbuilders of Long Island and their employees will be well-served by this book. Those also interested in the technology of shipbuilding and the products of the yards are likely to be disappointed.

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ALAN B. FLANDERS, ED., HENRY THOMAS, SHIP'S CARPENTER. *Around the World in Old Ironsides*. (Lively, VA: Brandylane Publishers in cooperation with the Norfolk County Historical Society, 1993). 134 pages, photographs, maps. ISBN 0-9627635-6-X. \$19.95

In 1844, USS *Constitution*, then in her fifth decade of service, was ordered on a circumnavigation under the command of Captain John ("Mad Jack") Percival. Her orders were to ascertain the safety and quality of American trade at various ports along the way, and to gather information on local resources, and especially the existence of coal mines. Exactly why the ageing *Constitution* should have been specially outfitted for this voyage when the Navy already had squadrons operating in most of the areas she was to visit is unknown. One possibility is that short-term Navy Secretary David Henshaw acquiesced to a desire expressed by fellow Massachusetts native Percival. In any event, sail she did, with Henry George Thomas aboard as her carpenter.

Thomas is no accomplished writer, but neither is he unlettered, occasionally coming up with a nice turn of phrase or an unexpected quotation from an ancient author of note. Through his eyes, we observe the making and taking in of sail, learn some details of various evolutions, and become acquainted with some of the prevailing American attitudes toward other peoples and cultures in the mid-nineteenth century. At Fayal, he records attendance at a ball including local people, where neither side spoke the other's language, making it a dumb show until two in the morning. At sea again, he notes the falling overboard of a seaman who had "many enemies onboard" and may have been pushed.

The carpenter's occasional comments about Captain Percival make it clear that most on board

respect and admire the old man (then in his 60s). Thomas thinks the captain has a particularly good disciplinary policy: malefactors at sea are punished just before arrival in port, and those ashore receive their due as soon as the ship puts to sea.

Madagascar draws Thomas' harshest criticism of Europeans. It is his belief that the native population was closer to the proverbial "state of grace" before the Europeans arrived and introduced "civilization", but now they are "treacherous" and "murderous."

A short while later, at the Portuguese colony of Mozambique, Thomas writes that the place must have been quite impressive in the decades following its founding in 1511, but now, all has fallen into decay. Writing of his visit to one fort, he describes the guns as "the survivors of the original battery of Noah's Ark."

Perhaps the high point of *Constitution's* thirty-month voyage was her stop in Turon, Cochin China (Denang, Vietnam). There, in May 1845, Captain Percival learns of the imprisonment of a French missionary and exercises his legendary impetuosity in attempting to gain his freedom. For two weeks, he threatens, cajoles, and assaults the locals without gaining his desired result. At the time of his departure, the Vietnamese are showing definite signs that their patience is nearing an end. The French later express official appreciation for Percival's efforts in their missionary's behalf, but the truth is that his actions soured such relations as existed between Cochin China and the United States for decades. Thomas' accounting of this period includes good descriptions of the area but, since he was not directly involved in negotiations and expeditionary activities, he is sometimes a bit confusing about what was happening.

The ship spent the summer of 1845 in China, at and above Macao. The carpenter was a good observer and an interested tourist, so his impressions come through "loud and clear." We get some accounting of Chinese views on architecture, religion, philosophy, and anatomy ("the stomach is the seat of the mind").

Subsequently, the ship visits Manila, where Thomas observes "for my part, I would rather smoke a cheroot made by a pretty Manila girl than the Havanas made by African Negroes, even though the Havanas may be the best." Honolulu,

which the carpenter noted, was "about the size of South Boston," and Mazatlán, Mexico, where there were troubles with drunkenness as the ship was held expecting the onset of the Mexican War, and the crew pressed to go home. In the event, *Constitution* finally was permitted to begin the last leg of her voyage in April 1846, just before the news of war's outbreak arrived, and she returned to Boston in September, worn out after 55,000 miles.

Henry G. Thomas is an honest recorder of the times and places in which he finds himself. It is sometimes frustrating that he is not more adept with a pen, but one can find much to enjoy and be enlightened by in his words. The great frustration with this edited edition is the editor, whose imprint is all too often inadequate. He does not appear to be familiar with wooden ships and the early sailing navy. His attempts at defining or clarifying nautical terms are crude and often wrong (main sheets are "small lengths of line [passed] through eyelet holes at the head of a sail to attach it to a yard"). He is equally inept at interpreting Thomas' geographical references, calling "Blenheim Reach" "Blenheim Beach," and locating the city of Hangchow "at the eastern [seaward] extremity of Hangchow Bay" when it is about one hundred miles to the west at the *head* of said bay. An inventive bit of geography is the placement of a "Fallopian Sea" (?) south of Japan on the western extremity of the Pacific Ocean. While editor Flanders used the published journal of Percival's clerk, Benjamin F. Stevens, to augment Thomas' prose, no use is made of the other journals extant from the voyage, especially that of Lieutenant John B. Dale in the New England Historical Genealogical Society, which contains graphics by a naval officer with artistic skill. Finally, the editor has provided little in the way of biographical information on Carpenter Thomas. He says that Thomas supposedly retired and lived out his years at Norfolk "where he trained apprentices to follow in the tradition of his trade." Henry George Thomas, in fact, tendered his resignation on 25 July 1861, was dismissed from the U.S. Navy on 27 July, and on 16 September accepted appointment as Acting Carpenter in the Confederate Navy.

Thomas' own words make a good read. It is

too bad that he did not have an editor to place his experiences in a proper setting.

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JAMES S. LEAMON, *Revolution Downeast: The War for American Independence in Maine*. (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1993). pages XVIII + 302, illustrations, map. \$29.95.

Downeast Maine is a state of mind as much as it is a political or geographic entity. From Boston, one sails "downeast" on the wind, holds New Hampshire and the Piscataqua River to port, and clears the Isles of Shoals to make a landfall where Mainers have always made their livings cutting trees and hauling fish. They also mined and burned lime, dug clay and fired bricks, cut granite for building stones, sawed ice in their rivers to preserve food, and hauled it all away in the vessels they built. And they carried the food they could not grow on their hard-scrabble farms.

Hard-scrabble Maine was, at the time of the Revolution, essentially an eight-mile wide strip of habitation along the coast and up the rivers for only 47,000 people. They could say then, as they do now: "We have two seasons: Winter and the Fourth of July." Those long, harsh winters and the strenuousness of the work to be done there has kept Maine's population from doubling since the Civil War while the rest of the Nation's numbers grew eight times.

Colonial Maine, Leamon explains, was a colony of a province in an empire referring to how the royal province of Massachusetts had bullied, cajoled, and forced the people of the lumber ports and fishing villages Downeast to come under its jurisdiction. This engorgement, British policy toward Maine's white pine trees that made masts for royal warships, the difficulty of settling land claims, and an aggressive and unwanted Anglicanism all combined to make many Mainers ready to revolt against the British Crown, or the Massachusetts General Court, or both.

It is of these circumstances that James Leamon writes. A professor at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, Leamon has walked the ground of which he writes and focuses on the slow evolution of the politics of revolution in the three counties which comprised Maine: York, Cumberland and Lincoln. The evolution, he maintains, began with the Boston Port Act in 1774 and endured until 1789 with the last attempt in that era by Maine men to separate from Massachusetts and achieve statehood.

Maine's revolution centered on Falmouth (now Portland), Pownalborough, and Machias, and produced two leaders who faced vastly different problems of sustaining the rebellion in Machias and Falmouth: John Allan and Samuel Thompson. Leamon gives these two men well-earned recognition. Leamon also explains the state of the Maine militia, the problems of distance in defending the three counties, poor communications, and Maine's need to import food to support her lumbermen and fishermen.

The book deals with some maritime aspects of the Revolution in Maine and tells how the Boston Port Act began the strangulation of Maine, the first naval battle of the Revolution (the HMS *Margaretta* Affair) and the burning of Falmouth by the Royal Navy.

The author mentions British seaborne attacks on Maine coastal communities and the three Yankee water-borne invasions of Canada that were launched from Maine: Benedict Arnold's attack on Quebec in 1775 and the picayune efforts made in 1776 and 1777 against Nova Scotia. He alludes to Maine men's privateering against British shipping in the Gulfs of Maine and St. Lawrence, but gives slight emphasis to the destruction of the area's fishing interests and the injuries to her maritime trade.

In the fourth of his seven chapters, Leamon discusses the British seizure of the Bagaduce or Castine and deals with America's greatest naval defeat. That occurred on August 14, 1779 when a flotilla of seven vessels of the Royal Navy entrapped the forty American vessels that were blockading Castine in Penobscot Bay. The Yankee crews cut and ran up the Penobscot River, scuttling all of their vessels on the way. Leamon also considers the political implications of this action

for the British. After their seizure of Castine, the British attempted to create the province of New Ireland there as a refuge for Loyalists. Politics in the Royal Court, not American efforts, caused the failure of the enterprise.

The book's fifth chapter offers a credible explanation of the social and economic costs of the Revolution in Maine: the problems of "squatters" obtaining title to their lands; stacked, rotting lumber; silent sawmills; gaunt, unemployed men with starving wives and children; high taxes; inflation; and Rebel or Tory neighbors who feared each other for their lives.

The author acknowledges the importance of the late Ronald Banks' seminal volume *Maine Becomes a State* when he shows how Massachusetts and its three Downeast counties tried to modify their Royal Charter to form a government in the years 1777 to 1779. He explains how the east coast commercial centers of Boston and Salem, for example, dominated the process and got a constitution by simply rigging the election count in 1779. The argument in Massachusetts over the adoption of the Federal Constitution is also explained here.

Leamon's final chapter surveys the legacy of the Revolution in Maine when cheap land brought an influx of people, and when a group of leaders in the Falmouth/Gorham area tried to secede from Massachusetts to create a new state. Shay's Rebellion in Western Massachusetts prejudiced the effort with its radicalism, and a series of conventions, ending in 1789 failed to achieve statehood Downeast. His assessment of how the Revolution affected women, Indians and slaves — yes, Maine had slaves — is solid.

This general history of Maine in the Revolution has value for both the scholar and the layman and is enhanced by its excellent 23-page bibliography.

Leamon fails to mention how the Battle for Louisbourg in 1745 fired the revolutionary spirit in Maine and New England. The Massachusetts-led campaign struck at the fortress of Cape Breton Island to alleviate problems that the Crown would not solve. The three counties of Maine lost hundreds of men in the campaign. The Crown negated this Yankee victory when it returned Louisbourg to the French — in 1747. Many of the

expedition's survivors later fought against the British during the Revolution.

Lawrence Carroll Allin
Norman, Oklahoma

Shorter Notes

MICHAEL DUFFY, STEPHEN FISHER, BASIL GREENHILL, DAVID J. STARKEY, AND JOYCE YOUNGS, EDS., *The New Maritime History of Devon* (London: Conway Maritime Press, in association with the University of Exeter, 1992, 1994).

Vol. I: From Early Times to the Late 18th Century (1992). 256 pages, illustrations, index. ISBN 0-85177-611-6. £35.00

Vol. II: From the Late 18th Century to the Present Day (1994). 272 pages, illustrations, index. ISBN 0-85177-633-7. £35.00

These two oversize (10" x 12") and profusely illustrated volumes together comprise a comprehensive history of an English county which quite obviously has an extensive maritime past. More than sixty separate chapters, by nearly as many individual scholars, treat almost every conceivable topic, from cartography to coast defenses, from steamships to shipbuilding to seaside resorts. Nor are dockyard or naval developments omitted. The chapters on the whole are short (few extend beyond ten pages) and are by many well known historians whose books and reviews are familiar to readers of *The American Neptune*, such as Andrew Lambert, J. D. Davies, and N. A. M. Rodger, in addition to the several editors themselves. Other contributions are from local Devon experts, many at the University of Exeter, less familiar overseas perhaps but still essential to these volumes. Each contribution, finally, is fully documented with appropriate references and useful monotone illustrations, maps, and charts. Altogether, this collection, as Greenhill remarks in an epilogue, sets a remarkable standard for local county-level maritime history.

ADRIAN SELIGMAN, *The Slope of the Wind* (London: Seafarer Books, 1994). xii + 219 pages, illustrations. ISBN 0-85036-443-4. Paper, \$16.50.

Adrian Seligman, having failed his Cambridge exams, overdrawn his bank account, and lost his girl friend, went off to sea in the summer of 1930. After acquiring some experience in coasters, he made the long haul to Australia, first in the Finnish bark *Killoran*, then in the larger four-masted *Olivebank*. His description of these voyages belongs in the genre, sadly now forever closed to newcomers, of the great transoceanic grain races, so ably described by Alan Villiers and Eric Newby (who contributes a very brief introduction to this volume). Seligman's account is somewhat shorter than those classics, but his description and illustrations of the *Olivebank's* race with her great rival, the *Herzogin Cecilie*, is well up to the mark. So, too, are his memories of dusty days waiting in Australian outports, and an unusual lengthy stay in the Aaland Islands, home to so many of his Finnish mates. It is a readable, entertaining book, available from the American distributor, Sheridan House, 145 Palisade St., Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522.

AMASA DELANO, *Delano's Voyages of Commerce and Discovery: Amasa Delano in China, the Pacific Islands, Australia, and South America, 1789-1807*. Edited with introduction by Eleanor Roosevelt Seagraves (Stockbridge, MA: Berkshire House Publications, 1994). xxiii + 425 pages, illustrations, glossary. ISBN 0-936399-56-2. Paper, \$14.95.

Amasa Delano's interesting observations on his voyages of 1790-94, 1799-1802, and 1803-07 to the Pacific and the Far East, with descriptions of islands and ports encountered along the way — including Pitcairn, Easter Island, Tristan, and the Galapagos — was first published in 1817 in a now-scarce edition. The full text, some 600 pages, has been reprinted before, most notably by both Praeger and Gregg in 1970; these versions are not so easy to find either. In this new edition, Delano's kinswoman Eleanor Seagraves has

reduced the text by at least one-third, omitting in particular the more detailed navigational notes and records, useful in 1817 but considerably less so today. The object, as William T. LaMoy of the Peabody Essex Museum remarks in his foreword, is to make available to a new generation the core account of American commerce and interaction with foreign peoples in a useful (and affordable) format. Some two dozen illustrations from the Peabody Essex Museum and the Library of Congress have been added to enhance the text.

UWE SCHNALL, *Leuchttürme an deutschen Küsten* (Hamburg: Ellert & Richter Verlag, 1994). 96 pages, illustrations. ISBN 3-89234-521-X. DM 19.80.

This oversize (9½" x 12¾") attractively produced volume illustrates the lighthouses of the German coast from Borkum to Usedom. A brief history accompanies thirty-three color and nearly as many black-and-white photos (the text is in German throughout). America can hardly challenge European lighthouses for antiquity (Rostock, for example, had warning lights in its approaches at least as early as 1348); on the other hand, despite the beauty of the photographs, North American readers may find the settings a bit disappointing when compared to New England or the Pacific Northwest, but then the German coast is generally low-lying. Lighthouse enthusiasts will enjoy this interesting and reasonably priced volume available from the publisher at Zeisehallen, Friedensallee 7-9, 227/65 Hamburg, Germany.

ANTONY TIBBLES, ED., *Transatlantic Slavery: Against Human Dignity* (London: HMSO for National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 1994). 168 pages, illustrations, bibliography, index. ISBN 0-11-290539-0. £14.95.

This volume is at once a catalog published to accompany the opening of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery at Merseyside Maritime Museum in Liverpool — hence its profuse illustrations — and a collection of fifteen papers dealing with various aspects of slavery and the slave trade. Some of the essays deal with slavery in general,

African resistance to enslavement, slave society in the Caribbean, British abolitionism, and other such subjects. Others, including those of David Richardson and Anthony Tibbles, the book's editor, focus particularly upon Liverpool's role in the traffic. Of more specific maritime interest are Edward Reynolds' chapter on "Human Cargoes" and M. D. Stammers on "'Guineamen': Some Technical Aspects of Slave Ships." The 191 illustrations, some in color, add much to these short survey articles. The book is also available in a special cased edition.

BJORN L. BASBERG, JAN ERIK RINGSTAD, AND EINAR WEXELSEN, EDS., *Whaling and History: Perspectives on the Evolution of the Industry* (Sandefjord, Norway: Kommandor Chr. Christensens Hvalfangstmuseum, 1993). 214 pages, illustrations. ISBN 82-990595-6-9.

The fifteen papers collected in this volume were delivered in 1992 at a symposium honoring the seventy-fifth anniversary of Commander C. Christensens Whaling Museum in Sandefjord. Roughly half of the volume focuses upon Norwegian whaling, from the medieval era to the present, though most Norwegian chapters build upon Arne Odd Johnsen's massive 1959-70 four volume history, concentrating especially upon the social side of modern whaling. E. Niemi, for example, discusses modern whaling on the Norwegian Arctic coast, while E. Wexelsen considers working conditions on Norwegian floating factories. Other papers carry the Norwegian theme into more distant waters, as in Robert Webb's on the Pacific Northwest, or A. Dickinson and S. W. Sanger's on Newfoundland. Gordon Jackson extends the focus to Britain in the nineteenth century, and Klaus Barthelmess to German whaling. South Georgia is discussed in two papers; geographical discovery in Antarctica in another (R. Headland). Stuart Frank concludes the collection with an overview of scrimshaw, 800-1960. All selections give full citations, and most are well illustrated with photographs and charts. Although the volume lacks a general index, a note on contributors is supplied. Since the format (9½" x 12") is somewhat larger than normal, the text is

more extensive than the number of pages would indicate. Altogether, a valuable volume for any whaling history collection, available from the publisher, Sandefjordmuseene, Museumsgt. 39, 3200 Sandefjord.

IAN NICHOLSON, *Log of Logs: A Catalogue of Logs, Journals, Shipboard Diaries, Letters, and All Forms of Voyage Narratives, 1788 to 1993, for Australia and New Zealand, and Surrounding Oceans*. Vol. II. (Published by the author: 18 Wunnunga Crescent, Yaroomba, Queensland, 4573, Roebuck Society Publication No. 47, 1993). 607 pages. ISBN 0-646-09132-4. No price indicated.

This is an important supplement to Nicholson's first volume of *Log of Logs* published in 1990. Not only are many new logs and other sources listed for vessels unmentioned in Volume One, but in many cases new information is provided for ships already treated in the first volume. For example, Volume One provides a paragraph on the Commonwealth Line steamer *Moreton Bay* which ran between England and Australia in the interwar years; Volume Two, however, adds another paragraph on her service in World War II, together with a photo and information on her eventual demise. The phrase "surrounding oceans" is taken with the widest definition. The reader will find, therefore, information on the log of HMS *Bellerophon*, which fought at Trafalgar, of which a microfilm copy is to be found in Sydney. Inevitably there are glitches: the researcher interested in *Bellerophon's* later career is told to "see reference under Hulks," but, alas, she seems to have been sunk on her passage to that anchorage, for no such reference is made. Such minor flaws aside, these two volumes, taken together (and it must be stressed that the value of each is much diminished without the other) are a mine of



information on vessels, logkeepers, and published and unpublished sources on both, since wherever known such information is provided (often with an illustration of the ship) along with each entry. Both volumes belong in every serious maritime reference library; they are available, along with such other reference works from the Roebuck series as are still in print, from the author at the address given above.

NORMAN J. BROUWER, *International Register of Historic Ships*, 2nd edition (Peekskill, NY: National Maritime Historical Society in association with Mystic Seaport Museum and South Street Seaport Museum, 1993). 392 pages, illustrations, index. ISBN 0-904614-46-8. Paper, \$37.75.

The first edition of Norman Brouwer's valuable reference work appeared in 1985. This new

edition discusses 1,300 vessels, 600 more than the previous edition, and includes 600 black-and-white photos and 16 pages of color. Appendices list vessels removed since the first edition, vessels by date and type, and owners and operators of the vessels. The coverage is world-wide, including 52 countries. All historic watercraft (over 40' in length) currently being preserved by museums or other non-profit groups for their historic or educational value are included regardless of age. Each entry includes all available information, including date and place of construction, propulsion tonnage, dimensions, history, and current situation, roughly half of them accompanied by an illustration. In short, this is an essential item for any active maritime collection, and should be purchased to replace the now outdated first edition.

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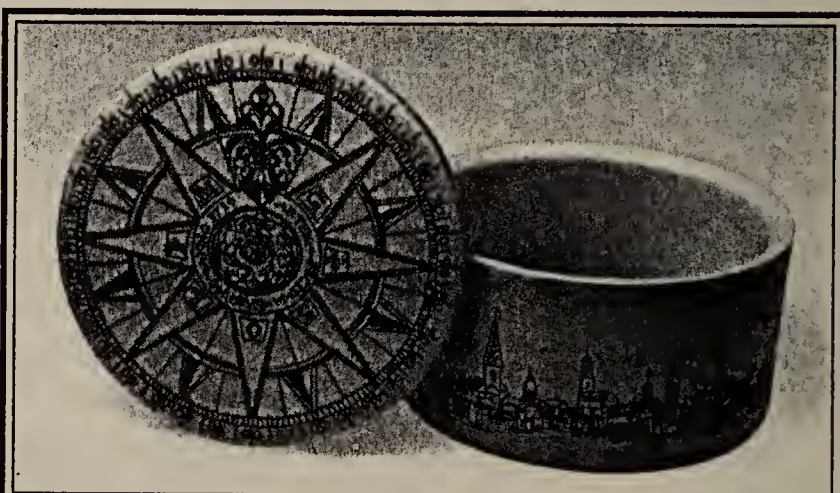
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Packet Liverpool, anchoring in the Mersey, off Wallasey, c. 1828.

Built in Medford, Massachusetts, in 1828, by Thatcher Magoun for the second Boston-to-Liverpool Packet Line. Unidentified artist. Oil on canvas. 28 in. X 40 in. Peabody Essex Museum Collection

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